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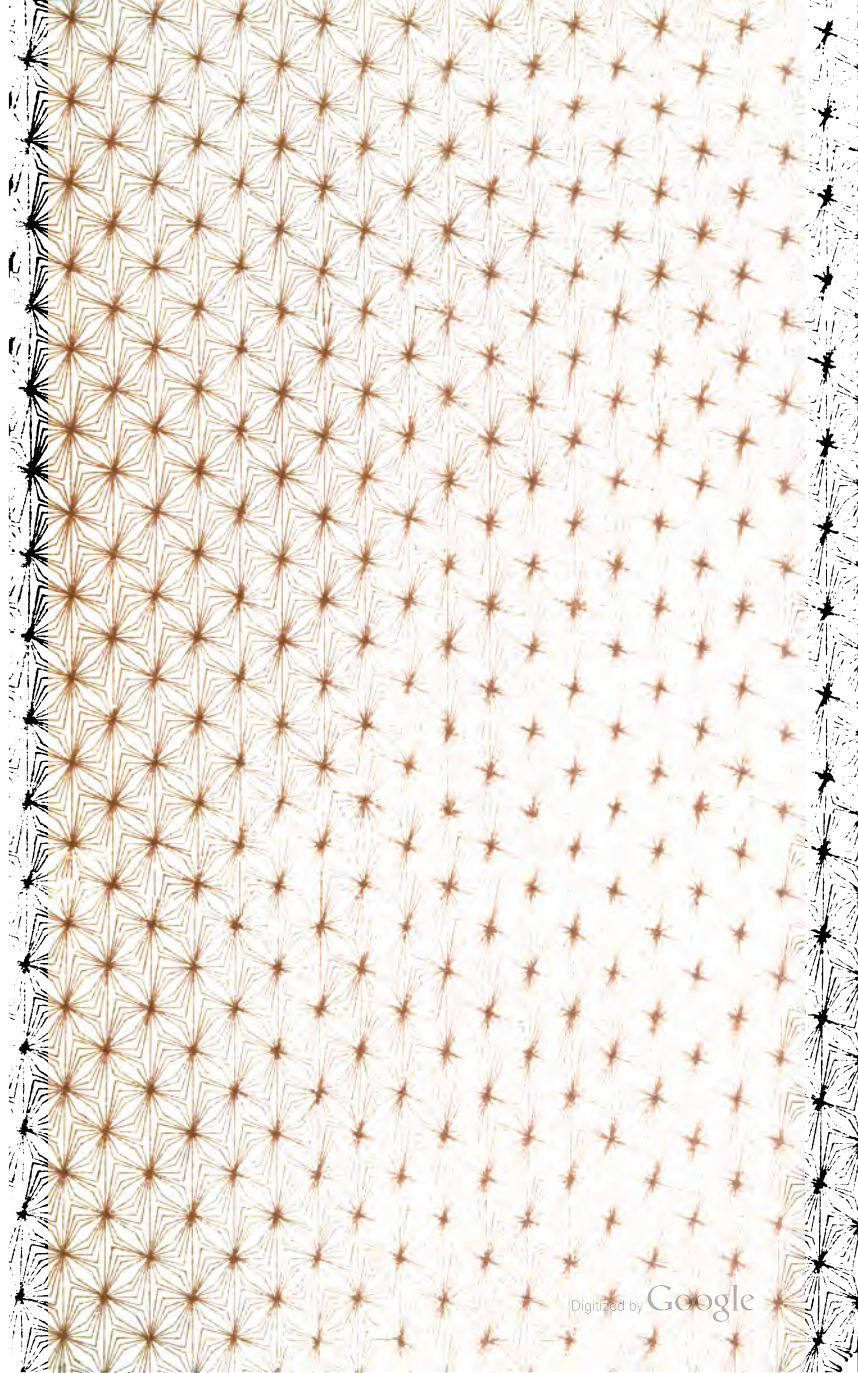
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BY  
**REV. ISAAC C. HUGHES, B. D.**

FD 8970

MARY RICHARDS











MARY RICHARDS









THE  
DENIALS OF RATIONALISM;  
OR,  
MAN, GOD, AND THE BIBLE.

BY  
REV. ISAAC C. HUGHES, B. D.,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
PROF. GEORGE F. WRIGHT, D. D.,  
OF OBERLIN,

AUTHOR OF "AN INQUIRY CONCERNING THE RELATION OF DEATH TO  
PROBATION," "LOGIC OF CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES," "DIVINE  
AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE," "STUDIES IN SCIENCE  
AND RELIGION," ETC.

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UTICA, N. Y.  
T. J. GRIFFITHS, PRINTER, 131 GENESEE ST.  
1891.

KD8970

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REV. ISAAC C. HUGHES, B. D.,

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## P R E F A C E .

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Books have become so numerous, and the announcement of a new publication an event so common, that unless an author can promise something entirely new, either in the matter of his publication or in its arrangement, he is considered as making an unreasonable demand upon the public, if he expects his book to be read.

While the author of the following work would hold out no very flattering promises of this kind, yet he thinks that he has sufficient reasons for appearing again before the public.

He has been induced to commit this work to the press, with the earnest hope that his feeble efforts in behalf of the truth and the rising generation may not be entirely fruitless. And he is the more encouraged in this hope from the fact that his former work in this same cause has met with so general and favorable an acceptance, and for which he offers his most grateful acknowledgments to the giver of all good.

He hopes that the apparent presumption in adding another volume to the many admirable ones upon the subjects, already before the public, will be pardoned, in view of another consideration.

The themes herein treated are so great and grand, involving questions and problems so varied, that whoever writes upon them may be par-



done for hoping that his added mite may receive perusal before dismissal, from at least some of the friends of Christianity, and thus the faith of a few be strengthened, and the cause of truth subserved.

The author trusts that the view of the Evidences given in the following pages may prove to be such as shall remove doubts from the skeptic's mind, and confirm the faith of the believer.

He hopes also that many readers may be induced to follow out the lines of thought here traced, by the aid of larger and more comprehensive works, which treat of the several points under discussion more in detail.

The object in the mind of the author has been simply to present the truth in as plain, concise, and yet comprehensive a manner as possible.

With this in view, he has deemed it far more important to give the substance of the best arguments, rather than a multiplicity of them.

In doing so, as will be observed, a free use has been made of other works bearing on these weighty subjects.

In a work like this, however, for one to entertain the hope of meeting the expectations of all, or even of those who endorse substantially the sentiments of the author, would be vain in the extreme.

From various causes, different sentiments will appear to be the most important to different persons. But be this as it may, the author would fain hope that a large class of Christians and other

inquirers after truth, may be enlightened, and to some degree benefitted by his labors, notwithstanding all their imperfections.

And he shall not feel disappointed if the reading of this volume is confined only to the narrow circle of his own personal friends.

But should its circulation chance to reach beyond these limits, he is happy in believing that the subjects herein treated are sufficiently varied and important to afford somewhat of interest, and it may be of profit, to those into whose hands it may fall.

In the hope that the following work may accomplish this result, the author hereby commits it to God, humbly praying that His richest blessing may attend it wherever it shall go. And should it thus prove useful to any by strengthening their faith, confirming the truth, and magnifying the cherished principles of Christianity, then to Him who reigns over all, the Most High and ever Blessed God, shall be ascribed all the praise, honor and glory. Amen.

ISAAC C. HUGHES.

P. S. We hereby gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to the Rev. E. E. Moran, of Ironton, Ohio, for his long and faithful service in correcting, reviewing and re-writing this entire work in its manuscript form before submitting it to the public through the press.

I. C. H.

## INTRODUCTION.

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I have looked over the whole of the manuscript of this book, and have read considerable portions of it with care. It impresses me, as I am sure it will every one, as the production of an author who has read widely and judiciously, has thought profoundly, has had the advantage of wide experience in the world, and has acquired the ability of writing clearly, forcibly and eloquently upon the profound themes of which he treats. It reflects great credit upon the profession to which he belongs, and better still, is well calculated to do much good in meeting various current phases of skepticism, and in making clear to believers the firm foundations upon which the Christian religion is established.

The development of the theme is natural and logical. The first chapter dwells upon the nature and characteristics of man, exhibiting the vastness of the plan upon which man has been made, the greatness of his capacity, and the extremity of his need. From this chapter upon the noblest of the works of the Creator, the author passes logically to the natural argument for the existence and personality of God. From this point he proceeds to present the evidence that the Bible is such a rev-

elation as we should expect would be given by a benevolent God to such a race of men. Then follow the various specific evidences of the divine authority of the Bible, such as those from the miracles, from the original rapid propagation of the gospel, from the harmony of the various parts of the Scripture, both among themselves and with the teachings of nature. Then follow extended and valuable discussions of the authenticity and genuineness of the Scriptures, and the various vicissitudes through which they have passed in their transmission; and finally a chapter which we wish were longer, upon the interpretation of Scripture.

The facts upon which the arguments of the book rest are ordinarily given with sufficient fullness to make the chapters both interesting and instructive. While not committing myself to every position taken by the author, I can sincerely say that I have read few books which from beginning to end adhere more nearly to the true line of argument upon the subject treated, and present the truth more persuasively. I heartily commend it to the Christian public.

G. FREDERICK WRIGHT.

OBERLIN, O., *July* 19, 1887.

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# MAN, HIS ORIGIN AND NATURE.

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The question, "What is Man?" is one which every person may well ask himself in view of the fact that God has made him a little lower than the angels,—or a little lower than Deity.

In all ages of the world, this has stood next in importance to the question of "What is God?"

What, am I a man? Whence did I come? Whither am I going? What is my destiny?

These are questions which have arisen in the heart of humanity through all time, calling both long and loud for a solution that will at once lift the burden of doubt, and set the anxious soul at rest.

The wonders of man's body and mind ever present him with subjects worthy of the deepest thought; and in proportion to his meditation upon them, produce a corresponding development of the mind in its powers of reason and in the exercise of his imagination.

They unfold to his mental vision new objects for investigation; and as one after another is brought within the sphere of his thought, the man constantly increases in the knowledge of himself, until he appears a marvel of marvels, even greater than that of the outward visible world.



Not alone the manifestations of law by which he is everywhere surrounded, nor yet the outgoings of power which constantly meet his gaze, but the consciousness that within himself are aspirations which are not of his own creation, and which ever rise toward Him that is invisible, urge him to find out his nature and the cause and object of his being.

And while even the *lower* motives have their place in the exercise of the great powers with which he is gifted, yet the question of paramount interest to him is, what is the end of this spiritual nature or constitution with which as a man he is endowed?

He sees death working around him as well as life.

And he asks of himself, of nature, and of God, what is his final destiny, which death seemingly interrupts?

He asks the question in good faith; and not for the purpose of building up for himself some splendid fabric of philosophy, cold and glittering as the icebergs of the polar seas, and which shall, like them, one day, under the warmer touches of the sun, be sent drifting down into greater seas of speculation.

He enters upon the investigation of this question as being one of vital importance to himself, recognizing that he was not intended to inhabit *this* world alone, but *another* also, into which he enters through the mystery of death. His life

seems but a brief hour in comparison with the lengthened years that have passed by and which still stretch out before him into the future,—a mere atom in the vast universe, and yet he is conscious of a something within him which shall out-run the years of time, and is grander by far than either stars, or mountains, or seas.

He has felt aspirations within himself which can only find their realization in God, and will be satisfied with nothing less.

He holds in his grasp the threads of being, with a spiritual vision which leads out beyond the mysteries of earth and sea, up above the starry heavens, passing thrones, principalities and powers, until it gazes in the restfulness of faith upon the Creator and maker of all things.

And as this vision breaks upon him, then it is that he cries out with amazing wonder, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?” What is man compared to the rich glories of the heavens and the vast profusion of worlds that float across the sky in their lustre before his vision?

Herein then is a marvelous thing, that God thinks upon him, and remembers him continually!

But the contrast is not so great between man and these systems of worlds that people space, as between himself and the infinite Creator. The least grain of *sand* is not so small compared to the whole *earth*, as man is to Him that formed him. And yet all God’s creation combined hath not more wonder in it than one of us.

All His other creatures were made by a simple command; but man, not without a divine consultation.

Others were made in their several shapes and forms, like to none but themselves; but man alone in his own image.

They were endowed with qualities fit for service only; but man for dominion. Hence man is placed over all, as *king* in creation, and with a crown upon his head; which means that he was counted worthy to wear it.

God made the man and furnished the crown. He is God's own royal child; for we read in the New Revision, "And thou hast made him a little less than God." It is not hereby meant, as some would teach, that man is the Infinite finited, but that as compared to the clod, the tree, and the beast, he comes but little short of Deity.

That is to say, in relation to all other things in creation, man is placed the nearest to God, who hath put the crown of dominion and authority upon his head, to rule all below him, and yet obey Him who is above.

Glancing along the scale of being, where do we find man?

As Young sang it, is he not the distinguished link in being's endless chain? "midway from nothing to Deity?"

Even he who is recognized as nature's poet, while he exclaims with rapture over his marvelous powers, yet questions in his mind the real nature

of his essence, saying, "What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason; how infinite in faculties; in form and moving, how express and admirable! In action, how like an angel; in apprehension, how like a god; the beauty of the world—the paragon of animals!

And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust?

The Psalmist, standing in the midst of the vast creation, and contemplating the power of Him who spread out the heavens and hung them upon nothing; who threw out these glittering orbs, and holds them in their course as they sweep their cycles round, felt his own littleness, frailty and sin, as he thus looked Godward.

But thence a glance earthward brings to his consciousness another thought, in which man's littleness is swallowed up in his greatness, and he appears in nature almost as God, having dominion, power and glory. Hence he concludes that man is not born to roll in dust and die as the mere creatures, but to walk upright, reign and live for ever. In the scale of being, he is a little lower than God, but higher than the highest of all other creatures, for he hath dominion over all sheep and oxen and every beast of the field. So Moses had declared long before, and history and science confirm the statement.

There are two ways of viewing man, the one in his relation to the physical world, and the other in his relation to the moral world.

In the former we contemplate or study him in

his relation to all the creatures, which we may denominate the downward look ; in the latter his relation to God, which is an upward look. From man downward we have science, and from man upward we have theology. The one shows man at the top of the scale, the other shows him at the bottom. The downward look shows man to be a royal ruler, the upward look shows him to be a royal subject. In this twofold view of man, we see him bearing the image of all below, and the image of Him who is above, even of God, who said, " Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness :"

" So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him." Thus we see from science how that man is placed in kinship with the beasts of the field, and even with the rush of the swamp.

And when we analyze the bones and liquids of the body, do we not find him akin even to the stones of the earth and the waters of the sea ?

Then too, his bones, muscle and nerve are in substance like unto, and serve the same ends as in the animal ; and like them he maintains his existence from the products of the earth and sea and air. But his being formed in the image of the earthy, and bearing this relation of kinship to all that is below him, does not necessarily preclude the higher relation which he sustains by virtue of his being created in the image of God also. On the other hand, when theology looks at his words,

his actions, his sentiments, his unfolding and conquering ideas, and seeing his face turned heavenward, says of him, "Man is a child of God," it does not thereby preclude the idea of his possessing likewise an earthly relationship.

It is therefore in this sense, and because of this two-fold relationship, that man may be said to be "the distinguished link in being's endless chain! —midway from nothing to Deity."

Marvelous indeed is the correspondence between man and the world about him; and so it must be, if he is to be at once the royal sovereign of earth and the royal subject of God.

Man steps forth upon the earth, and stretching out his hands over all nature, takes his place as an enthroned monarch.

The earth is his mother, and God is his father; therefore he is akin to all above and all below him.

As the result of such relation he is so allied both to material and spiritual forces, that he receives power and authority from the one to exercise dominion over the other. Without this divine, spiritual relationship, he would soon be overcome and swallowed up in nature.

But with this divine image, and the power it imparts, he stands forth as nature's conqueror, compelling her forces to serve him even as subjects do their king; and then gathering sweet incense from flower and fruit, he, as the priest of all below, offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise to God above.



Reaching down he touches and takes hold upon all below ; and with his thought he lifts all with himself toward God.

With his resources of power he can gather treasures from the rock-bound minerals of the earth, and the lowest beds of ocean depths.

He holds in his hand the muscle and nerve of the animal, and hence can grasp the animal force.

With every nature-force combined within him, he can thus touch every nature-force without.

And with the additional power of thought, in consequence of that rational spirit, or image of God, with which he has been endowed, he can direct his energies for conquest, and rule right royally over all below.

There is in nature both a law and a gospel which say that man is king over the earth, as well as a priest unto God.

Being thus highly honored and exalted above all other creatures, it is within his power to become either the glory or shame of the universe.

The mythical sphinx, therefore, in which the human face rises out of the form of a wild beast, is not without impressive significance. In it we find the animal carrying the human, while the human guides and governs the animal.

The custom of deifying the human, as practiced among the heathen, is suggestive at least that there is a divine above the human, and that man is akin to all.

In him there are substances and qualities of the whole creation and of the Creator too.

The rose, rock and thorn have their corresponding elements in him, as well as the lamb, lion and wolf. He is the audience chamber of heaven, and of perdition likewise.

Voices from both worlds echo in him. To which he shall give friendly audience, and which shall rule in him depends wholly upon himself now. He is invested with the highest dignity and honor of all creation.

Indeed, Goethe called man "the *plan* of all creation."

Novalis said that "man is the systematic *index* to nature."

In addition to both these ideas of man, as thus expressed, Dean Goulburn says that he is "a little miniature of the *universe* in himself, representing the angels in virtue of his immortal spirit ; the lower creatures in virtue of his sensations and appetites, and matter in virtue of his bodily substance."

But it matters not how much he may possess in common with nature, either above or below him, he is nevertheless conscious of being a self-determining, free and responsible moral agent.

He may, if he chooses, act *like* an animal, yet by constitution of his nature, he must ever remain more than mere animal. For God has stamped upon his being the impress of His own image. He has given him the power of thought, by means of which he passed beyond the material and visible, and at the same time has placed the whole earth

in subjection to him. He is thus placed before us in creation, not as a being who looks toward earth, as if that bounded the aspirations ; but with form erect, and eyes turned toward the heavens above, as if he bore some inseparable relation to that which they contain.

He appeared *first* in the garden which he was to till ; not indeed with all the appliances of art, and the discoveries of invention which are *now* in his possession for comfort and use ; but in the image of his *Maker* he came, and took his appointed place in the midst of creation, as lord of all that surrounded him.

He lives not in the refinement and culture of modern civilization, nor yet in the degradation of barbaric ignorance and the meanness of the savage, to which man in some instances afterwards descended. But he stands forth in Eden in his innocence ; in the purity of his original creation ; in the glory of his bodily strength ; with intellectual faculties for the highest achievement in thought, and with powers capable of using nature according to the dictates of his own will. While in perfect harmony with his surroundings, yet he is distinct and separate from them, living in the filial attitude of the child to its parent, and manifesting his love in obedience to that law which his heavenly parent has given him to obey.

This is in substance the answer of the Bible to the question, "What is man?" From this view of man we turn to another given us by the theory of evolution.

According to this system we have twenty-two different forms of life, developing one from another along the ascending scale, beginning with the protozoa, or earliest form of life, and ending with the *homines*, or true men, possessing the power of intellect to formulate a Homer, Plato, Moses, Solomon, Paul, Shakespeare, Newton, Luther, or Wilberforce. We have his last progenitor in the ape, being itself the development of the mollusk, that clings instinctively to the rock in the sea, without any evidence of possessing a single thought.

It is clearly manifest that the classification of animal life into this series of living organizations, leading up from the lowest to the highest, is made by the development of the projectors of thought. But the link which binds man to the *Pithecaulthropi*, or dumb ape-man, is not found.

The connection is lost which joins this grand being called man, with his noble powers of thought, reason and speech, and an instinct for worship, to the grinning ape, whose reason is mere cunning, and whose strength constructs in this age of advanced learning, art, science, discovery and invention, just as it constructed in the beginning.

Without variation, and without shadow of turning, from generation to generation, from century to century, and from age to age, it has remained the same—only an ape. Nevertheless we are asked, in the face of all our experience and ob-

servation, to believe that *inorganic* life has the power to develop into *organic* life ; in other words, that the protozoan through countless evolutions, through periods of intense cold and heat, hostile to life, wrought itself into the form and glory of man. The theory as advanced is, that vegetable stuff, perhaps in the form of a mushroom, developed by means of its own innate force into something like a jelly-fish ; the jelly-fish by a like process into a tadpole, the tadpole into a snail, the snail into a lizzard, the lizzard into a turtle, the turtle into a wolf, the wolf into a dog, the dog into a baboon, and the baboon into a man.

Darwin says that our lungs are a simple form of "*swim-bladder*," showing conclusively that we once floated, and were amphibious ; and that the ears were once as flexible and easily moved as those of the horse now are.

And thus we are shown how that by some mysterious provision of nature the development has been from plant to pollywog, from pollywog to insect, from insect to fish, from fish to reptile, from reptile to monkey, and from monkey to man.

We meet with this difficulty, however, in accepting the theory thus offered, growing out of the fact, that between the physical construction of the highest brute and that of the lowest man, there still remains a deep and unbridged chasm.

But these theorists tell us that probably the half-way creature, or connecting link between the brute and man, may yet be found in Central Af-

rica, among those undiscovered ourangoutangs; and then the highest step in the animal scale and the lowest step in the human, will be brought together, the chasm be bridged over, and the development from the lowest to the highest complete in man.

But while these scientists are in search for the "missing link," here are some facts for us to consider. The largest brain of any gorilla ever found contained about thirty cubic inches, and the smallest of the *human* brain over seventy cubic inches.

Then again the average brain of an European weighs fifty-seven ounces; that of the negro from thirty-eight to fifty-one ounces, while that of the gorilla only weighs from seventeen to nineteen ounces.

To span the distance existing between the two, even in the size and weight of the brain, to say nothing of other marked divergences, we need a bridge of many arches. The anthropoid ape, which is assumed to be the immediate ancestor of man, neither has any representative living, nor have the remains of any such a creature ever been found.

None of the various skulls of the so-called original man, as for example the Neanderthal, Eugis, Cromagnon, and others, nor the fossil remains of any extinct race of men have shown any approach to the ape-type.

The difference which now exists between the

skulls of man and of the ape has *always* existed, so far as Panteological discoveries afford us any knowledge.

Pushing the investigation still further, we find a difference also between the muscle, nerve, and blood-globule in the animal of Darwinian and Spencerian eulogy, and man. The bird is more like man in musical capacity, the mastiff in affection, and the horse in intelligence.

The gorilla as it appears to-day, and which in these modern times has received such humanized elevation, is the very same in form and structure as represented on the walls of ancient cities ; thus showing that it has made no advance whatever.

Besides, if according to the theory of evolutionists, man descended (by an ascending scale as in this case) from a pair of catarrhine monkeys, why, we may ask, did not *all* the monkeys of this species bring forth the same kind of descendants ?

Were these the only two, by natural selection, to be honored thus above all others of their class with human progeny ?

Common sense teaches us that all the catarrhine apes should and *would* bring forth the same in kind. But to account for this seeming inconsistency in the law of development, evolutionists tell us that as the species takes a higher form, the original type dies out.

If this be true, then why, after developing into the human race did not all the kingdoms of ourang outang, chimpanzee and baboon become extinct in their order of development ?

We plainly see in this, as in many other instances, how that every theory of evolution assumed is either a contradiction or a monstrosity.

There are *physical* conditions of life also which, through all the ages, mark a permanent distinction between the human and the brute creation.

One difference patent to all is the fact, that in the higher forms of life, the animal is able to take care of itself within a few hours, days, or months at least after its birth ; while the human race on the other hand, begins life in a condition of utter helplessness, and so continues with but a slight improvement during the first ten or twelve years of its existence.

The chick, for example, has only been a few hours out of the shell when it begins to pick its food.

The calf, hog, colt, and whelps of the lion and bear, very *soon* become active and strong enough to make their own defence ; whereas the human child, if left to itself at any time during the first five years after its birth, would perish.

Man only reaches his full strength in twenty-one years ; while most of the animal creation within that time, not only complete their development of powers, but degenerates into weakness and dies of old age.

Now, had we been derived from the brute-creation, then by the law of nature we would have inherited their precociousness, and they likewise would have exhibited our peculiar weaknesses.



Here then are *inherent* differences which all the processes of nature in time past have failed to diminish, and marked physical conditions which neither pass over from the one realm of being to the other by any known law of development, nor are amalgamated by any possible combination of elements so different. We must conclude therefore, that by the doctrine of evolution, born of unbelief in God's Word, men have simply built up for themselves a splendid theory, which like the gorgeous "ice-palaces" of northern regions, may indeed be beautiful to *look* upon and to be *admired* as a work of human skill and genius; yet it is *only* a theory, which, in time, must disappear under the more genial sunlight of reason, knowledge and investigation, even as the "ice-palace" melts away under the penetrating beams of the summer's sun.

There would have been as much intelligence, forethought, and *miraculous power* required on the part of God for calling into existence a law to gradually develop an ape into a man, as to create the man outright at the beginning.

The difficulty is no greater in the one case than in the other.

Darwin has spent years in experimenting with fan-tail pigeons to see if he could not effect a cross with the quail or barn-fowl and thus produce something other than a pigeon, and differing from either species.

Others have tried the same experiment with cattle, and sheep, the dog and the cat; but in each

case nature refuses to transgress its set bounds, and so they continue as from the beginning, each bringing forth after its own kind.

The most successful attempt to pass over from the dumb brute to articulate man, of which we have any authentic record, was the one which Balaam witnessed in the beast upon which he rode; but the angel of the Lord with drawn sword in hand, soon put to an end that evolution.

Even the highest type of animal *known* has absolutely nothing in common with the lofty nature of man, by means of which *any* theory of evolution could make it the projector of the human race.

The difference between the animal and man is therefore a *fundamental* difference, based upon an unalterable law of nature; which says by its application to every variety and species of life, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further."

Man has in himself a distinct, personal, free and individual life, which the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, the fishes of the sea, and the insect world have not.

Although both have bodily necessities in common which they seek to satisfy, yet he alone is responsible for the *way* in which he satisfies them.

Both have the power of sense in common; but he surpasses them in possessing the faculties of reason, judgment, imagination, and conscience, or the sense-perception of right and wrong.

Where they have animal desire or natural inclination, man has the governing power of *will* also.

And where they have instinctive yearnings, man has intellectual and spiritual aspirations.

The difference then is a radical difference, extending both deeper and wider than that existing between man and man.

In the one case it is a difference of constitutional structure, in the other of mental power by means of culture and development.

Hence if one man differs from his fellow-man,—if for example, the philosopher or thinker of civilized lands differs from the native of Central Africa or Australia, it is not in the original structure, not in the reasoning faculties themselves, but in the strength and power of those faculties which one mind has acquired over the other by culture and development along certain lines until it has thus secured the sublime mastery.

Man in the highest and lowest form is capable of what the animal is not, viz : abstract ideas.

No such capacity as this has ever been discovered in the lower animals, either in any century or age of centuries, neither by observation nor the testimony produced by the fruit of such ideas.

They have given to the world no philosophy, nor have they offered any contribution to mental science ; neither do they give evidence in any way of being able to produce such magnificent works as these.

They have never shown an ability to formalate even the *simplest* thought into speech.

Whatever likeness in *other* things may be traced

in man and the lower animals, yet after all *articulate speech* is the chief barrier which separates him and them. It stands as a great mountain wall between the summit of his supremacy and the lowland of their deficiency, and over which they can neither bound by the power of ideas, nor ascend by the gradual process of development.

There is in man the possibility to become a scholar, poet, thinker, sage or benefactor, and to rule the *world* by the power of his ideas; but with the animal in any degree of development, all this is impossible.

It may be taught to come at the call of man, and through fear also crouch in submission to his command; but when mind would speak to mind, it is dumb.

The most enrapturing poem ever read brings forth no answering echo of harmony from its lips. The grandest and most soul-stirring thought when expressed, awakens within it no responsive thought.

The world of invention and art, with all its beautiful harmonies and orderly arrangements in nature, is ever to it an unknown world; —a land over which it looks with listless eyes of blank indifference.

When we pass on to the consideration of life in its relation to matter, we are conscious of the fact that although we find life in unison with matter, yet the life is neither derived from nor dependent upon matter; because it cannot generate those qualities of which it has no corresponding germ in itself.

It follows then that the great moral qualities of self-consciousness, self-denial, and self-sacrifice, are not inherent properties of matter, although they may manifest themselves in and through the actions of the material body.

These qualities cannot be the offspring of that in which there is no manifest likeness, creative power, wisdom to arrange, will to organize and control, or personality which implies a like personality.

We must conclude therefore that the life in matter is produced by God, and that it is life in *growth* simply; but not the life of intelligence and spiritual power which we find in man, and distinct from all *other* forms of life.

For "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:

So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him," and by a sacred decree made him master of the whole earth, which power of dominion he inherited as the gift of his Father.

He therefore bears to the earth and to all that is in it, only in a less degree, the same relation which God Himself bears to the universe.

And so man was made not only in the *moral* image of God, but in the likeness of His *power*; and without this power the world in which he lives would be a mere desert. This power with which he is endowed implies a two-fold life in man, the one which he possesses in common with the beast

of the field, and that other by which he is allied to God.

Reigning in creation like a royal monarch upon his throne, he possesses a mind with its conquering power of thought, lofty imagination, will to do, wisdom to apply, and a conscience to guide him in all, by which he is lifted far above the earth in everything that is merely earthly in its character.

But in distinction from this there is *another* power also which binds him to the earth akin to that which governs every other creature.

He lives, moves, and maintains his natural subsistence even as they. He hungers and thirsts, and therefore of necessity eats and drinks. He wakes and sleeps, he works and rests. He is imperial force and blind instinct bound together in a mysterious union. He is grand in power, yet lowly in dependence. He is in possession of a life with magnificent faculties approaching the Deity in their character, and a life which also shows its earthly cravings in common with the creatures that have been put in subjection to him.

We can know him in the entirety of his being, only in proportion to our knowledge of the life which he exhibits; so great and yet so lowly; so plain to human science in his physical structure and powers, and yet in the wide range of his mental and moral possibilities so marvelous and full of mystery.

Being a man, he is in his material form a marvel of beauty; and in his physical structure he is far

superior to all other living creatures. The lower animals by the provision of nature, are indeed *wondrously* adapted to the world in which they live; but in man, along with his more delicate and sensitive organization there is also a still *higher* power of adaptation to the physical world in which he is placed.

And as the *moral* nature ranges far above the mere *animal*, by so much the physical form in which it operates must also be superior. Man alone of all the animal creation is cosmopolitan, and of man alone it is said, that "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." There was a matchless symmetry in his being and grandeur in his bearing as he came forth from his Creator, witnessed in no other work of His hands.

Being created upright in figure and of royal mien, man was not only the best fitted but the most worthy to become lord and monarch of the earth.

What exquisite beauty is manifest in the eye as it meets with sympathy, beams with joy, or flashes with wit and humor.

What a marvelous power does it exert over man and beast, and what a variety of languages does it speak. The important part it performs in thus giving expression to the emotions, has given it the name of "the window of the soul."

And when we come to study its organic structure, the cornea, iris, and retina, with its convex and concave lens, we can but exclaim how wonderful is

the intricacy of its mechanism,—by the nicety of adjustment combining power and delicacy ; and by the mysterious function of accommodation, beholding with accuracy objects either far off or near by.

A leaf from the smallest flower may, when placed near the eye, obstruct its vision entirely ; but let it be removed, and to the now open eye the broad heavens are unfolded.

By the law of contraction and expansion it can adapt itself with ease to the book we hold in our hand, or gaze with pleasing delight upon the far away starry deeps where world after world float in silence by.

The light that started on its errand from these heavenly bodies in the countless years of the past, falls on its lens, when their image is at once photographed upon the mind, so that we can tell their comparative size, form, color, and distance from us.

This organ not only has a superlative value in the practical affairs of every day life, furnishing us with immediate information concerning the external objects of nature above and around us, but by reason of its commanding position, rapid movement, and close communication with the brain, contributes more largely than any other of the senses to the culture of the intellect and to our higher forms of pleasure ; and for this reason chiefly it has become the subject of enthusiastic study, wonder and admiration.

By means of light, the whole visible world is penciled within its orbit like a magnificent panor-



ama, and ever varying in its gloom or grandeur with each passing moment. There are pictures of glory painted upon its retina from the landscape of nature such as no human artist ever put upon canvas. There are images formed upon it answering more perfectly to their original than the most skillful sculptor ever carved from stone or marble.

By means of the eye, as it sweeps from star to star and from planet to planet through the immensity of space, and conveys to the mind an idea of the infinite *distances* which separate them from each other and from us, we thereby gain a higher conception than from all our other physical powers combined, of what "from everlasting to everlasting" means.

Then too the hand of man marks him as a higher order than all the other animal creation about him. The very inequality in the length of the fingers is not only a proof of *design* but makes the hand the symbol of *force*.

By means of its peculiar construction it is capable of putting forth greater strength, and therefore can retain with a firmer *hold* whatever object it grasps.

It is the instrument of adaptation and skill, as well as of power and energy, hence it becomes a most potent factor in all civilization. It is the hand that clears the forest and fits it for man's habitation. It cultivates the ground and sows the grain that ripens for his use. The mind employs

it as a most useful agent in carrying out its manifold behests.

Accordingly it builds man's cities, which not only afford comfortable homes, but serve as great centres of commerce; it constructs his railroads and steamships for transportation and travel, and applies the arts and sciences in every conceivable way to minister to his comforts, pleasure and utility in life.

Genius uses it in reducing to a visible and material form the secret thought of the mind.

It pencils the landscape or the human face upon the canvas of the artist.

It carves the rough and shapeless marble into the polished form and beautiful image of a man, and so perfect is the delineation of character that we behold at once the orator, the poet, the statesman, the warrior, or the benefactor of the race.

The hand is needed in unfolding to the world from the hidden chambers of nature the helpful teachings of science, and invention needs it as an instrument to put into a practical form the results of its patient investigation.

As a servant of charity it reaches down in mercy to bestow the benevolence of the soul upon the poor and needy.

Under the control of the mind, it wields the manifold implements of toil, and effects the grandest achievements in the world's industries.

It is the highest wisdom exhibiting itself in noblest action, and thus becomes an eye to guide and

lead the blind, and a tongue to the dumb, by means of which he is enabled to convey his thoughts in written words or acted signs.

It expresses *mind*, therefore, in its gestures, work and completed toil. Its beauty and adaptation to the various wants of man, have made the hand an attractive theme for philosophers in all ages.

One has advanced the opinion that man has acquired his intelligence and achieved his place as "lord of creation," because he possesses this organ.

Buffon declares, in substance, that with fingers twice as numerous and twice as long, we would become proportionally wiser; but Galen, long ago, took a more reasonable view, when he taught that "man is the wisest of animals, not because he possesses the hand, but because he *is* the wisest, and understands its *use*, the hand has been given to him; for his *mind*, not his *hand*, has taught him the arts."

But what concerns us most of all at the present, is simply its application to the subject in hand, and for which purpose we have introduced it here.

When, therefore, we study the structure of the hand, with its slender, tapering fingers, and pliant joints, together with the strong, opposable thumb, thus combining the delicacy of touch and grace of beauty, with its elements of extraordinary power and adaptation, we need only repeat what another has so well said before, viz: that "no one can

study carefully the human hand and fail to be convinced of the existence of the Deity."

The organs of *speech* also indicate that man belongs to a nobler type of being than the brute creation. In each species of animal we find that the tongue can only voice one kind of utterance, and that their language cannot be increased or improved by the addition of *new* words as an expression of thought. If man were like the animal in this respect, then there could be no harmony between the development of the mind and the mode of expressing thought.

For this reason he could not give utterance to any new ideas which originated in his mind, and so, from necessity, he would lose a vast amount of his influence and power. Without the faculty of speech, society would lose much of its enjoyment, and life would be frustrated in most of its pursuits of pleasure and usefulness.

But here it is that we find the grandeur of man's physical mechanism—in the gift of speech. Civilization advances throughout the world only because man *has* this gift.

There is therefore an enduring and necessary bond of union between language in man and the law of his development in culture, art, science and literature.

The thought that thrills the mind with its power, the majestic or beautiful forms which imagination creates, the great things which reason ponders, the inventions which patient industry

achieves, the contributions which science gives the world, the diversities which law shapes into order, the glory which the heavens display or the earth unfolds, are formed into words, and the tongue expresses them to human understanding.

Gladness, in its more quiet or rapturous strains, sorrow, in its wretchedness or tenderness, sympathy in its grandeur or power, are voiced by the tongue, and it sends the words of supplication or thanksgiving to the very throne in the heavens. All these things produce upon the mind a profound conviction of the fact that in his physical being, "man is fearfully and wonderfully made."

In the adaptation of his body, in the exquisite harmony of the joints, in his brain, with its mysterious formation, in the symmetry of his form, in the delicate play of the lungs to meet the air around, in the hand that toils and achieves, in the eye that travels the pathway of knowledge and beauty, in the tongue also which describes by words the story of the spiritual and material natures, there are evidences of design, which none but man could receive or express on the earth. And in the heart, which the point of a needle could destroy, there is a wonderful engine, which moment after moment, hour after hour, month after month, and year after year, beats on tirelessly, and throbs with marvelous force, sending the blood through the arteries, and drawing it back to be cleansed for renewed life. In all this we have the proof of the greatness of man's material frame.

There is also a consciousness of the outgoing of divine power, both within man and about him, amounting to a clear demonstration of a magnificent design in all—the glorious formation of an almighty power.

We know man, both materially and physically, but *mentally* we know him only in *part*.

The intellect of man as a race has not yet arrived at a perfect knowledge of the world, nor the full capacity of its own powers.

But it is man as we find him on the *earth*, whom we are now considering, and not as he is, or may *become* in another world beyond this present one. Of that future state we may philosophize, but as yet we can know nothing of it from positive knowledge. In an uncivilized condition man and the animals of the brute creation are not very different in their manner of living.

Both work; but the animal's work is only the outgoing of *instinct*, or its natural tendency, while with man the action guiding force is *mind*, so that he gradually advances to higher modes of living, and to more intelligent methods of action.

The one follows the beaten track of its progenitors, making no change or improvement in its habits of life; but the other branches out by new paths and inventions, and *adds* in many ways to the comforts of life.

Man applies his knowledge to the culture of the ground and to the construction of improved implements of toil, so that the once rude and barren

waste becomes a scene of beauty under his skillful touch, and its hills and plains gladden the heart with their stores of luscious fruits and golden grain.

In contrasting his with other forms of life around him, we find that the animal has in all the ages only developed physically, while man has developed mentally.

The results of the grand victory achieved by man's intellectual powers over material nature are everywhere manifest, whereas the animals make *no* such conquests.

They build no cities, bring forth no inventions, make no progress, and produce no results from age to age as the fruit of mental processes; while man on the other hand discovers, invents, and overcomes the *world* by the power of thought.

As a discoverer, he crosses the widest seas, penetrates unknown continents, explores their long hidden mines of wealth, and forces them to yield up at his command their rich stores of capital, with which he goes forth to convert the hitherto dreary waste into homes of happiness, industry and civilization.

As an inventor, he devises ways and means of changing crude matter from one condition into another, and thus transforms it into useful materials for the skilled artisan.

With these he builds houses, rears monuments, erects temples, adorns palaces, and furnishes the magnificent mansions of state.

As the philosopher, he investigates and brings to light the secret forces and principles of nature, thereby enriching the world with his knowledge thus acquired.

He also analyzes the various functions and laws of the mind, and unfolds the wonders of its resources in thought, wisdom and power.

If a statesman, he conducts the affairs of the nation with prudence and equity, enlarges its material resources, applies the principles of civil and religious liberty to the needs of the commonwealth, and hands them down as a glorious heritage for the benefit of all future generations.

As the benefactor of his race, he enlightens the untutored hordes and lawless tribes of the earth with a knowledge of the principles of jurisprudence, transforms barbaric powers into empires of civilization, then discovers and applies new methods for their cultivation in the arts of peace.

In the primary stage of civilization, nature was as often man's master as his servant.

But as he thinks and advances, under the pressure of her opposing forces, his thoughts develop new forms of activity, and he discovers new appliances for their subjugation, until at length his command over nature is so enlarged that her most secret powers are brought to lay their humble trophies at his feet.

Those forces upon which he once looked with suspicious dread, and as being antagonistic to his welfare, are now reduced into peaceful harmony,



and become his most trusty friends and obedient servants, working out his will in ways innumerable.

Nature, therefore, has become to him one great store-house of inexhaustible *wealth*, which lies in readiness for his appropriation and use.

A whole *world* of latent energies lie hushed in slumber within her bosom, only waiting for his skillful touch to awake them into activity, as so many ministers to his comfort and pleasure.

And the resources of his mind for converting them into agents of useful service through all the various industries of life, baffle calculation. Neither can any bounds be placed to the progress of his thought or to the achievement which he may accomplish in the future.

The knowledge of nature which his mind may yet acquire outmeasures the power of imagination to conceive.

Through the discoveries of science he is ever unfolding marvel after marvel for the benefit of mankind. He explores the hidden depths of the earth, and upon its rock-formations of antiquity writes out in sculptured letters his conviction of the power of Him whose hands placed them there as a witness that He is "from everlasting to everlasting." He ascertains the size, computes the weight, and estimates the relative value of things in the earth, and assigns to each their appropriate place in the economy of nature. Matter in all its varied conditions yields to the power of his mind,

and is fashioned anew by his hands into forms of artistic beauty and articles of utility.

The sun, which is nature's only chronometer, shines upon us, and we know that it is day; it sets, and we are in darkness.

But to combine convenience with accuracy, man by his genius constructs the clock, which is so adjusted in all its parts that when the hidden spring performs its work, the delicate wheels move, and the hands go forward as if they were urged on by a living force; its heart beats the seconds, its index marks the minutes, and its tongue proclaims to us the hours both by day and by night.

Then again, the *mineral* solutions and essence of *vegetable* matter, which are poisonous in their natural state, under his therapeutic skill become a panacea for all human ills.

His chemical art transmutes the most unsightly things into gems of rare beauty, and by a similar process the rudest mire is transfigured into precious stones.

Just as the breath of the damp, foul marshes is transformed by the touch of the sun into gorgeous clouds of various mould and hue, so man takes the gross matter at his command and converts it into such shapely forms of richest grace and color, as may most delight his taste or minister to his pleasure.

That which the animal has no faculty for knowing, he, by the power of intellect, not only comprehends, but can tell its origin, and solve its purpose.

He beholds the proofs of wisdom and design, where the eye in itself, without the aid of reason, can see only tint or form ; and where shape or motion is presented, he perceives the clear manifestation of both law and proportion.

To him the earth is the great book of nature, from which he is ever learning new lessons which bear witness to the greatness of his own mind and the power of his Creator.

Man lifts his eyes towards the heavens at night, and reads in the light of the glittering *stars* the creative power and glory of God. Follow him as in thought he moves upwards through space, and behold what *wonders* he performs in those far away unmeasured systems. His mind makes a path for its thoughts, even through the clustered nebulae of the Milky Way.

He has discovered by investigation the law which not only guides each star and planet in its course, but holds *all* things in the position for which they were made.

By means of astronomy he ascertains their proper place and use in the heavens, and learns their influences and motions.

He measures their distances, determines their size, and estimates their relative importance. As their master, he gives them their names.

He computes by his philosophy the nature of the sun, and the fires which throw out upon the world their light and heat from age to age.

He catches the lightning which flashes in the

sky, and it becomes his swift messenger to carry on the wires of the telegraph over broad continents and through the depths of the widest seas, his communications of joy or sorrow.

The sunlight falling upon a chosen object, and being reflected by it upon the prepared plates within his camera, prints for him in perfect outline a picture of that object, either great or small, as he may desire it.

The winds, too, are made his servants; and as they sweep on their way from the North and South, the East and West, they bring messages from which he can foretell the time and the place of both storm and calm upon land or sea. For his use in the application of science he has constructed the anemometer, by means of which he can measure the force and velocity of the slightest breeze that stirs.

If he wishes to make a tour through the air, he takes his seat in the car which his own genius has constructed for the purpose, and is then borne aloft upon the wings of the wind by means of the subtile ether-servant his wisdom has employed.

And thus the spaces which cannot be measured become his pathway, and their inhabitants the objects of his knowledge.

If he wishes to make the lightning a minister of relief to him in time of sickness, he calls it forth from the battery which his inventive mind has devised.

He takes the sand, which the sea so listlessly

casts upon its shores as a worthless thing, and moulds it into glass for his use, in every form of design and beauty.

The varied landscapes of the earth are photographed by his camera, from which he arranges a picture gallery of royal magnificence.

Far back in the past the mariner could only sail slowly and uncertainly along the coasts of his own land, being shut in by the sea or baffled in his course by storm and the obscuration of the polar star. But in the discovery of the magnetic needle, ever true to the north pole, he found a friend to guide him from land to land over the widest seas and through the darkest storms. And now from the rising to the setting sun his ships of commerce track the waters burdened with the products of his thought and labor. Mind is manifest in all that he has thus far accomplished, and no power but that of God can limit his victories over matter in the future.

Even if this human intellect, which some look upon only as a development from the lower forms of animal life, had invented simply *one* fine art, that result would in *itself* have been sufficient to mark a distinction between man and the brute; because a fine art does not spring from any natural want, such as food, drink, shelter or clothing, and it cannot show any natural reason for its existence, as these do.

If man, therefore, had simply learned the science and art of architecture, he would have been

entitled to the place of highest honor; for it is a remarkably strange phenomenon that only *one* such prodigy should be discovered among all earth's creatures, with power to construct the grand cathedrals and richly adorned palaces which cover the old world, and which follow in his wake to newly settled shores.

But what must we say of this child of earth when we see him applying his knowledge and power in the practice of three *more* arts—turning rude blocks of marble into lifelike forms of exquisite beauty, blending promiscuous colors with dexterous skill into the grace and comeliness of the lovely painting, and reducing the most discordant sounds into the harmony of sweetest music?

What is this wonderful structure called man, together with all the various products of his skill and genius displayed before us, but so many outward manifestations of the human *mind*?

With this existing distinction between man and all other forms of life, we must conclude therefore that the *earth* has not developed him into the condition we now find him, but rather as the facts go to prove, that man, acting through the agency of his own innate faculties, has thrust himself outward and upward, and has thereby developed both the earth and himself into their present state of civilization.

As the universe did not develop the Being we call God, so this planet by no law of its own has produced man.

As the seed of a flower, or a grain of wheat contains all the hidden potencies of leaf, stalk, blossom and fruit, and even in a barren soil will struggle to open out and pass through all *its* successive stages of life and utility, so the human mind contains all those pent-up energies peculiar to itself for a *like* purpose, and by a law as natural as that unfolding the seed-germ, records in all its *intellectual* efforts a similar method of development.

The earth under the control of man is a miniature likeness of the universe under the sway of God.

And the order of cause and effect in creation was, not that the world made God, but that God created the world.

All sober thinkers of the present day admit that there is no evidence *whatever* either in experience or in reason to prove that matter can produce mind;—that mechanical action can generate mental action;—that chemical action can give birth to consciousness;—that electric action can reason, or organic matter by any of its natural processes rise to the idea of the good and the holy.

We argue that these must therefore call into action a power above the atoms themselves to produce such phenomena.

There is certainly something behind the phenomena of nature, and that something must be a God, a personal, intelligent God.

And man is so God-like in his character and being that all nature toils for him.

The winds and waves, the minerals of the earth, and the forces of the vegetable world, are all under the command of his mind.

Nature like a colossal vassal brings her secret forces and her greatness and lays them at the feet of man, her ruler and lord.

Man is a being of marvelous aspirations ; even thrones and dominions, principalities and powers do not satisfy him.

The gift of an empire only makes him yearn for vaster rule.

Even the kingdoms of the earth are not large enough for the cravings of his heart.

His inclinations are boundless ; they go on from wish to wish, from the possession of power to power, and in the heights and depths of his being he reaches out for something greater than the mastery of the world ; for this when attained can not fill the splendid capacity of his intellectual nature.

Indeed, man is God-like in the sweep of his intellect, for his intellectual and emotional world is the universe.

He is not like the wild beast, filled by nature and instinct for only *one* thing, but for countless aims and ends.

The bird can build a nest, the beaver a house, the nightingale can sing a song, and the many forms of animal life are filled to accomplish some one thing.

But they are all like a mere machine which can



only do the one thing it was made to perform. A press can print, a saw can divide wood, and a die can make an impress of itself. But a die with Cæsar's head on it will print only that head forever. In like manner the brute of any grade is limited to a single achievement.

There can be no pretence made, either upon the ground of natural law or reason, that man is contained in the monkey.

On the other hand there is much more evidence for the supposition that the monkey is contained in man, since the cause must always be greater than the effect.

And, indeed, the law of causation would be less *violated* in supposing the lower species to be derived from the higher, than by the reverse. We say that man has in him all that the monkey possesses, and something more.

It would be no violation of the law of causation to drop something, but if man has, as we claim, something more, where did he get it? No latent force in a monkey, or in the laws of nature would be likely to bring something out of nothing. There is likewise no evidence that within historic time there has been the least tendency in any race of monkeys to drop the tail, or to develop the thumb or the chin, or to assume a more upright position, or to use articulate speech for the purpose of conveying human thought, or to worship an invisible being. Neither has any species lower than that of the monkey shown any aspirations in this direction.

But if the upward tendency even existed, no good reason can be given why it should have ceased. Most evolutionists say that nature never makes transitions by sudden leaps; but the distance between the monkey and man is so great that the transition could have been made in no other way. To originate a new species, there must be two individuals of the new species produced, and of different sexes, at the same time. Man is spoken of as originating from the monkey, either suddenly or gradually, as if it would be sufficient, providing some one *man* had thus originated.

But not so; there must have been simultaneously a man and a woman, or the species could not have been perpetuated; and the chances against this from any tendency, or operation of natural law, are beyond the power of computation. It would seem then that evolution can give no account of the *origin* of anything.

It can give no account of the origin of matter, or of forms in which life works. It can give no reason for that upward tendency in which it claims to have faith; and it has no adequate reason for thinking that the tendency now exists, or if it does, that it will continue.

Evolution may be, and seems to be, a method by which God works to some extent, but as a rational account to the intellect of man for the present state of the world, or as making provision

for the wants of his heart and his moral nature, it is an utter failure.

The inner voice of man's moral and spiritual nature finds its answering voice in the eternal spirit of God that breathed him into life.

God has unfolded to his spiritual nature His ways in history, has foretold him the preparation of the nations for the reign of righteousness, and has surrounded him by signs and wonders.

His Creator communed with him in the garden, spake to him in the unconsuming splendors of the bush, held back for him the sea, and made a place for his feet between the obedient waters. On his way through the desert, he had for his guidance and protection the pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night.

The heavens were entranced with joy when one came down to redeem him; and the plains of Bethlehem were hushed to hear the angels' song of "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." Thus we find that God is ever mindful of man, whom He has created.

From Him man comes, and to Him man returns.

His power set in motion the blood which runs in its life-currents through the arteries of the human frame. It is said that "In Him we live, and move, and have our being; . . . for we are His offspring."

Therefore God is ever present with man. Among all the varieties of the universe, among all

the immensities of government, man is to Him, the separate, individual being, for whom He cares as though there were none others.

He supplies the intellect with material for its necessity and growth, and has endowed it with capacities to meet all conditions.

And so man stands as a witness of his own greatness, in the marvelous scope of his mental power ; in his wonderful imagination which reaches on from height to height until it compasses the universe ; in the tenacity of his memory which links the past to the present, and thus enables him to retain the history of the world and of life.

#### MAN IS AN ENDLESS BEING.

Life once appearing in man, although it may in time depart from the tabernacle of human flesh in which it chose to dwell, yet it never dies.

The infant which exists but an *hour*, it may be, as a mere bud giving promise of the fragrant flower, or as a ray of light within the home, inspiring hope of the brighter sunshine to follow, has been endowed with a glorious immortality. Neither time, space, nor death can destroy it.

Even that infant of a day is fearfully and wonderfully made, possessing in embryo all the attributes of the man, and invested with a potentiality for the grandest issues of life in the world to come.

For in man there is a power more durable than

the hills, and currents of being more irresistible than the tides of the sea.

It is true that the birds have an adaptation for flying through the air, and the animals a capacity for roaming over hills and plains, which he has not.

The lightnings which rend the rocks may appear more *terrible* in the demonstration of their power than man.

The stars, planets, and constellations which burn through the nights of the ages may appear more *immutable* in their being than this seeming creature of a day; yet the race still holds on in its course with as much constancy and precision as they in theirs. But man in his higher nature possesses what they do not, an everlasting being, an immortality of existence.

Each one of us has been brought into life, and it is impossible for us now either to escape or evade its responsibilities.

The soul of man has native ideas and instincts of immortality which are prophetic at least of its revelation.

The idea of immortality, which ebbs and flows in the human heart like the restless sea, beating against the sands and rocks of time and fate, was not born of any book, creed, or religion.

It was born of affection, and will continue to rise and soar notwithstanding all the mists and clouds of human doubt and unbelief that may gather about it.

This abiding thought of immortality, or a renewal of existence in the world to come, is no strange thing.

To deny the continuity of life after the dissolution of the body, is to reduce man with all his powers of thought, calculation, hope and reflection, together with the spiritual aspirations and moral responsibilities of his nature, to a mere compound of conglomerate atoms which the analysis of the chemist reduces to so much oxygen, hydrogen and carbon.

It is true that we find a multitude of erroneous as well as ridiculous opinions concerning man's immortality; but research has only served to quicken the idea, already existing, into renewed activity, until it has stirred the souls of men everywhere with its supreme importance.

All peoples have their sacred books and traditions, in which a general and personal immortality are universally taught.

We find in the Hindu sacred books beautiful conceptions of immortality, expressed in unadorned language, and in the simplicity of child-like confidence. The idea also exists in the common life of the Egyptians. Their national works are monuments to their faith in a future life.

Advancing to the more cultivated and refined nations, we shall find a likewise progressive belief in immortality.

The classic literature of Greece, Rome and Palestine is all colored with the prevailing belief in a

future life, with its rewards of virtue and punishment of vice.

And Sydney Smith says that man in every stage of society, civilized or savage, has universally believed that he was to live hereafter. We can not resist this universal consciousness of immortality, —the fact that the human soul is capable of and predestined to an unending life.

And it is an unthinkable thing that this universal expectation of the race, born of our very nature should be doomed to disappointment.

There is less uncertainty as to the reality of our future existence in another world than there is as to the reality of our existence here at any future time.

I am more confident that I shall be alive *somewhere* in a hundred years hence, than that I shall be living in *this* world even ten or five years hence.

There are changes constantly going on around us, changes mostly through the death of the present into more advanced forms of life.

The bodies in which we live, the outward condition of things, even the world itself, and our thoughts respecting it, are *continually* changing. And these external changes have a tendency to hide from us the inmost life of all.

But, however great may be the changes which attend us from childhood to age, there is still a conscious personal identity which is, and always will be, the central essence of our being.

What we are to-day is only what we find our-

selves to be from the natural development, of what we were yesterday.

And what we shall be to-morrow, or a thousand years hence, we can be only from the natural development, in each stage, of what we have been in the immediately preceding stage.

There is a unity of life, or rather one continuous life reaching on through all outward experiences, showing itself to us in our personal consciousness, in our appropriating, subordinating and assimilating to ourselves whatever may be congenial, whether it be good or evil.

Our immortality then is not a thing of the future simply, and to be entered upon only when we lay aside these mortal bodies, but it is within us *now*, a quality of our being which contains in itself the germ-principle of continuance. The arguments for the soul's immortality show a very great diversity in their degrees of abstruseness or of popularity.

Philosophers of different ages have held both strange and contradictory views in regard to the soul, its origin, nature, and immortality.

*Pythagoras* taught that the soul is a harmony based on numbers,—that it consists of two parts, one of which is rational and immortal, and the other sensual, irrational and mortal, both of which are united in man, being imprisoned in the body as a punishment for former misdeeds.

*Philolaus* taught that the body is both the organ and the prison-house of the soul; and that the two are harmoniously united by means of numbers.



*Leucippus* and *Democritus* were the founders of the Atomic Philosophy, and taught that soul and fire are of one and the same nature, and are composed of small round atoms which have an eternal and uncaused existence; that sensation comes from outward objects, and reaches the soul through the physical senses; that these invisible fire or soul-atoms permeate the whole body, but exercise peculiar functions in the different organs; that in breathing we inhale and exhale these soul-atoms from the air, and that life lasts only so long as this double process continues.

From this theory it also follows that the soul perishes with, and in the same sense, as the body.

*Critias* taught that the soul originates and resides in the blood.

The theory of *Plato* was that there is a world-soul, which was created from three elements, one of which is neutral and intermediate between the other two, which are opposite and opposing,—the first being indivisible and immutable, and the third divisible and mutable; but the three are harmoniously blended and distributed throughout space.

The human soul was made like the world-soul, having a divine element, whose seat is in the head,—the other two parts, rational cognition and sensuous perception; and combined with this are two other souls, which he describes as being pre-existent, yet confined to the body and mortal.

One of these is the appetite-soul, which he defines as the disposition to seek after sensual enjoy-

ment and the means of obtaining it; and the other he calls the courage-soul.

These three, taken together, bear the same relation to each other as a driver and two steeds.

Only the first of these three is immortal, and is subject to transmigration.

*Plato* founded his doctrine of immortality principally on the nature of the soul, as containing within itself the essence of all motive power, and then, from the supposition that moral evil, which is its greatest enemy, can not destroy it, he reached the conclusion therefore that nothing can.

*Again*; his theory is based upon the fact that God's goodness, and the supposition that He can not or will not destroy that which is so admirably wrought together.

Then, finally; on the desire of the soul for a future incorporeal existence, and its relation thus sustained to both the visible and invisible realm, he argues further that the soul is necessary to the idea of life, that a dead soul is a contradiction, and hence immortality must be predicated of it.

*Origen* taught the pre-existence of the soul, and that it was sent into the body as a punishment for former misdoings.

The soul was defined by *Spencippus* as having form and extension, being proportionately shaped into a mysterious harmony with numbers, and that its vital force constitutes the entelechy or actuality of the body, which exists only for its service.

*Aristotle* taught that there is an intellectual ele-

ment in the soul which existed before the body, and hence had a divine origin, and is immortal; but that it contains other parts which are common in other orders of existence; that these may be separated from the first, and are perishable; but while connected together and with the body, constitute a perfect harmony.

The *Stoics* taught that the soul is a part of, or an emanation from Deity, but exists in us as a warm breath; that it outlives the body, but is perishable, and will endure only so long as the world-period in which it exists.

They did not suppose it to be a unit, but that its parts were the five senses, together with the faculties of speech and generation, which were controlled by a mysterious and governing power situated in the heart.

*Epicurus* taught that the soul is a material organism composed of exceedingly small atoms, which are nearly related both to fire and air, and that it is distributed through the whole body, but that its rational part is located in the breast. He taught also that something cannot come from nothing, and that existence cannot become non-existence, and hence the soul must be immortal.

*Plotinus* taught that the body is in the soul, and depends upon it for existence; and that the soul is separable from the body, and both precedes and survives it.

He held that the soul is the image of intelligence, as intelligence is the image of God; and

being only the image of intelligence, is inferior both in rank and character, yet none the less divine, and contains a generative power ; that it proceeds from the intellectual, and begets and permeates the corporeal ; that there is a plurality of souls, the highest and noblest being the world-soul, of which all others are only parts.

*Lactantius* taught that the soul can exist apart from the body, and will continue to live after the death of the body, since it partakes of the nature of God, who is incorporeal.

*Tertullian* taught that the soul proceeds from the *Father*, as does a shoot from the parent stock ; that all souls have proceeded from Adam, and that with each the spiritual quality of the *Father* is transmitted.

*Gregory* combats the pre-existence of the soul, and argues that the soul and the body came into existence at the same time, yet the soul may outlive the body, and gather again its scattered elements. He teaches that the soul is immaterial, since it has the power of thought, which is not an attribute of matter, and that it resembles God, as a copy resembles the original.

*Augustine* taught that there are two deaths—one of the body, when the soul quits it, and the other of the soul when it abandons God.

But he held the latter to be not a cessation of existence, but of that life which comes from God.

*Nemesius* taught that the soul is an immaterial substance, and the product of self-produced mo-

tion; that it had a pre-existence, and that no new souls are coming into being.

He rejected the theory of the world-soul, and also that of transmigration.

*Claudianus Mamertus* taught that the soul is immaterial, and subject to changes in time, but not in space; and that it has magnitude only in respect to virtue and intelligence.

*William of Avergne* taught that intellect is an essential element in the soul, which is related to the body only as the harper is related to the harp.

*Descartes* taught that the soul and body are connected together at a certain point in the brain; that they act and interact, and are mutually dependent the one upon the other.

*Lock* taught that the soul is originally a piece of white paper, having no ideas of its own, and that it afterwards acquires them through experience, from whence all knowledge comes. He considers the brain the seat of consciousness, and calls it the audience-chamber of the soul.

*Leibnitz* taught that the soul's power to act proves it to be a substance; and that it is the ultimate analysis of the bodily substance.

*Condilac* taught that the soul dwells only in thoughts which are agreeable to it.

*Kant* sought to demonstrate that the soul exists in space, but not in time; and that it is an incorruptible, immaterial, intelligent substance, endowed with personality.

*Herbert* taught that the soul is a simple essence;

that it exists independent of space, and yet is located at a single point in the brain, where it is penetrated by surrounding substances, and that its ideas endure after the occasion which calls them forth has ceased; but that since opposing ideas cannot exist in harmony, some are partially arrested so that the soul becomes unconscious of their existence.

*Albertus Magnus* taught that nothing can belong in common both to God and His creatures, and hence past and future eternity cannot belong to both; but by virtue of relation to God every soul may become heir to immortality.

*Thomas Aquinas* taught that the immortality of the soul follows from its immateriality; and hence it cannot destroy itself, or be destroyed by dissolution.

He held that the soul did not have a pre-existence, and therefore could not have acquired its ideas from a previously existing state; and that in it several faculties are united, although they differ from each other, as unity, love, truth and virtue.

*William of Occam* taught that the soul is a substance, separate from the body, and yet present in every part; and he set forth the doctrine of its separate existence upon the antagonism between sense and reason.

*Eckhart* taught that the soul is an unity in its essence, and yet contains the faculties of memory, reason and will, which bear the same relation to

each other as do the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that reason is the supreme faculty of the soul, and knowledge the ground of blessedness; and that when it leaves the body it becomes absorbed in God, and a part of Him.

*Trendelenburg* defines the soul as being a self-realizing final ideal; that it is therefore not a result, but a principle, and that man is elevated above the brute by his power to think.

*Beneke's* definition is, that the soul is an immaterial being, consisting of certain fundamental systems or forces, which are so combined as to constitute one personality.

*Ulrici* held that the soul exists as a centre of vital forces, and that it is a kind of fluid similar to ether, yet not consisting of atoms; that it extends out from a given centre; and that co-operating with and constituting a part of the vital force, it so penetrates the whole atomic structure as to produce physical life.

*Wagner* also defined the soul as being a kind of ether in the brain. He ascribed to it a future existence, and postulated future judgment and retribution on the basis of moral order in the world.

*Sir John Davies* held that the soul is a spirit; that it is not produced, but created; and that it is united to the body, not as a harper to the harp, but that it is diffused through and permeates the whole body.

*Henry Bodwell* endeavored to prove that the soul is naturally mortal, but rendered immortal by union with the Spirit in baptism.

*Galuppi* taught the unity, simplicity, individuality and immortality of the soul.

*Rosmina* affirmed the existence of a universal soul in Nature, one in itself, yet multiplied and individualized in creatures.

That the soul, though dwelling in the body, is yet a part of, and an emanation from God, is an opinion that runs through much of the Greek philosophy, and is seen even more ancient than this.

The doctrine of immortality has been held and taught in some form or other by all the heathen nations. We find it expressed in the prayers of the *Hindoo Vedas*; as for example in the following: "Oh Maruts, may there be to us a strong son, by whom we may cross the waters on our way to the happy abode."

And then again in these: "Where there is eternal light, in the world where the sun is placed, in that immortal, imperishable world, place me, Oh Soma."

"Where King Vivasvati reigns, where the secret place of heaven is, where the mighty waters are, there make me immortal; where the sum of our desires is attained, there make me immortal."

The doctrine is implied in the form of worship which the *Chinese* paid to their ancestors, and in the fact that when one of their number died, they said, "He has gone to his family."

It existed in the system of belief held among the Egyptians, who taught that after death Osiris, the Judge of men, weighs their hearts in the scales



of justice, and sends the wicked to a world of darkness, and the good to dwell with the god of light.

The *Persians* taught that he who lives in purity passes at death into the world of light and leisure.

And among all the uncultivated tribes we find the expressions of this doctrine, which are more or less vague and imperfect.

Having now threaded our way through these mazes of ancient lore, we will look out from the standpoint of reason, and see if we can answer the question, "Is man immortal?"

The motives for belief in immortality, which are to be found in men's hopes and fears, are of a *subjective* nature; and there always exists in such motives a doubt of the truth of immortality; hence, from of old, men have sought for purely *objective* grounds on which to base their belief in it.

And such grounds are sometimes supposed to be found in the nature of the soul, in the difference between psychical and physical appearances, and in the opposition of body and soul as two distinct substances.

Those who from old affection misuse the language of the faith, may well have claims upon our compassion and sympathy; but an explanation is none the less necessary, if we are to claim for truth her ancient rights, and for human speech its ancient meaning.

Most certainly is it true that in contemporary literature the word Immortality is clung to with

an unyielding tenacity, which fact proves in itself how, that in spite of their theories, men shrink from resigning themselves to the bald idea of absolute annihilation.

*Materialism says that man is immortal.*

But its immortality is that of matter, which although changing its form, can never perish. Matter is really immortal, indestructible.

Not even the smallest atom of the sum total of all existing matter can ever disappear from existence. Modern chemistry teaches us that the birth and dissolution of the organic and inorganic forms of matter around us only change their combinations, but that they can in no case either add to or take from the original mass.

Matter is thus the scene of perpetual, uninterrupted change ; but its mass and its quality are alike invariable.

The body then, although not immortal in its present existing form, is immortal in its constitutive elements.

The body will turn to dust, and the soul, which is only an effect of several molecules endowed with force, will naturally cease with the cessation of its cause.

But the dust itself is immortal, imperishable ; it will enter into new combinations ; it will subserve new forms of life to all eternity.

Positivism, too, promises immortality. Individuals die, but the race lives on.

It says, We cannot doubt that our species will

be perpetuated for ever. What though individuals die everywhere around us, and although we see not merely the old and the weak dropping, like ripe fruit, almost hourly, into their graves, but strong, robust men cut off by disease or by violence in the prime of life; yet does not life, nevertheless, encroach perpetually upon the frontiers of death?

Is not the great treasure of human existence ever being handed on down from sire to son?

Surely the *individual* may die, says the positivist, but humanity survives; and as the generations which have passed away, yet live in the veins and muscles of their descendants, so we in turn are assured of a corresponding life, after death, in the generations which will take our place and name.

George Eliot hymns this same hope in the following lines:

•“Oh, may I join the choir invisible  
Of those immortal dead who live again  
In lives made better by their presence?”

But upon the theory of positism, the great difficulty which intercepts the thought of these lines is, that after death there is no “I” to join any choir; because the “I” has ceased; nor is there any “choir” for the “I” to join for the same reason. The singers cannot gather together. They sing at different times, and one dies before another begins. Nor do they live in lives made better by their presence.

They may be remembered, it is true, but they themselves are not conscious of the remembrance. Their works may live like the works of Madrepores, in coral islands, but they themselves, with all that constituted their personality, their self-consciousness, are gone. Humanity itself cannot be said to be immortal rather than mortal. If its generations are coming, they are also going.

It is always dying, as well as always living ; and not only is it a changing, but a perishing series. Its real life is no longer than the life of its personal factors.

If all human beings perish, then humanity perishes with them.

*Pantheism says man is immortal.*

“We believe,” exclaim some leading Pantheists, “in immortality, and our immortality, be it observed, is real. We believe in something higher than dead matter and dead force.

A mere prolongation of the species, an immortality of thought or of example does not content us ; because man himself is not the species, nor yet the thought, nor yet the example ; and it is an imperfect satisfaction to him that these survive, if he himself is annihilated.

We do not merely maintain that the soul lives forever ; but we assert that it cannot die.

Nothing that exists can cease to be, since the idea of nothing involves a philosophical contradiction. There may be a transformation of the soul, but it cannot be literally destroyed.

The conditions of its existence may vary, but its substance must per-force endure.

That which makes up its ephemeral personality may give way to other modes of being, but its actual self can never perish, for the simple reason that it already exists."

This Pantheistic representation, from whatever cause, has a peculiar and fatal fascination for a large class of minds in our own day.

It insidiously escapes the repulsive and inhuman avowals of materialism ; for the creed of a Lucretius could never become largely popularized.

It therefore keeps clear of all such unsubstantial immortalities as those of race, thought and example. It might even seem, for the moment, to be almost radiant with Christian hope.

And as it bids us fear not to meet our last hour, in the philosophical conviction that no spiritual essence which already exists can really forfeit existence, we can almost hear the great Apostle chanting his strains of triumph, saying, " O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?"

But this illusion dissolves into mist when we perceive that Pantheism, in obedience to its leading principles, while admitting the *substance* of the soul to be indestructible, yet denies the immortality of the *personal* soul.

Let us admit for the sake of argument only, that this living, yet impersonal substance, this vague idea of a common fund of being, were *possible* in the abstract sense.

Still, we would ask, Is this immortality of Pantheism an immortality, we will not say in the ecclesiastical and biblical sense, but in the human acceptation of the term ?

Nay, verily ; this *impersonal* immortality is only another expression for annihilation.

Just as God's existence is practically denied by disclaiming His personality, so the immortality of the soul is denied by the philosophy which strips it of all that gives unity, identity and consciousness to our existence.

It is true that this theory asserts most certainly the continuity of something, of some substance or being, but so vague and indefinite that we can little hope to recognize it as such, from anything else in nature.

And to say the least, it is impossible for us to feel practical interest in a destiny so purely metaphysical and abstract.

The immortality of the personal soul, with its own history of thought, love, action and struggles, with its own enduring consciousness, with its peculiar physiognomy original and acquired, recognized by others without, and recognized by itself within, as being before God, is denied by Pantheism.

The only immortality which can aspire to interest and influence mankind permanently, must assert that the life of the soul in perpetuity is an *objective* fact, altogether independent of our mental conceptions, yea even of our moral activities.

A real immortality is an objective fact, and an immortality of a personal life.

Hence the Gospel does not say to us, "Create an immortality for yourselves by living conformably to moral order, or by thinking on the Eternal and the Absolute."

But it says in substance rather, "You are *already* immortal beings, whether you know it or not, and whether you will it or not.

You cannot now be other than immortal, for the simple reason that God has gifted you with an indestructible principle of life."

And if there is a principle of life within the seed of the flower and the grain of wheat reaching on beyond death, is it not reasonable to suppose, by analogy, that we shall find in man a law of the same import? Or, are we to look upon him as an anomaly in nature?

For if there is *no* immortality in store for man, then is his condition worse than the brute, and even inferior to that of matter.

But it is not at all probable that man with his nobler impulses and his far-reaching desires, with an intellect thirsting for infinite truth and ever craving that which it cannot attain unto in this world, is to be swallowed up in death.

Man is an immortal being by the original terms of his nature, just as he is an intellectual and sentient being.

God has also endowed him with a soul which is indestructible, and this quality of the soul is just

as much, and even more essentially a part of man's being than are the limbs of his body, or the peculiar faculties of the mind.

The arguments and motives which have induced the vast majority of mankind to believe in a world of life beyond the present, spring from the deepest and most trustworthy part of our nature.

We revere the empty sepulchre of Jesus all the more, when looking into its open door-way we there behold blossoming out in answer to human hope the bright terminal flower of *man's* immortality, which hope was faintly grasped by the patriarchs of thought beneath Assyrian skies, and lovingly cherished by Athenian sages as they conversed together under the shadows of the Acropolis.

This Christian doctrine is implanted within the very constitutional instincts of human nature.

And hence, wherever *doubts* now arise as to the truth of the soul's immortality, they are usually the result of absorption in the scientific study of matter.

The universe of sense presses so heavily upon minds of a certain cast, that they are dead to all spiritual perceptions and to those realities which belong to the world of thought, hope, reverence and love. From such minds occasionally comes the announcement that immortality is at best only a theory incapable of demonstration, and in itself an almost inconceivable mystery.

But the Newtonian law of gravitation, on which



modern science rests with utmost assurance, is only a theory,—a matter of faith originally, and confirmed only by subsequent observations, but like everything else outside the sphere of mathematics, incapable of demonstration without experimental knowledge.

It, however, rests on the inconceivable, for according to this theory, every atom and sphere of the universe acts where it is not—that is to say, each acts on every *other* atom and sphere.

But can a body act where it is not?

It is inconceivable; and yet we are required by science to believe that a body acts where it is not, through the ether which fills the inter-stellar and inter-planetary spaces, and this ether is described as being entirely solid.

The Newtonian law of gravitation, although a theory only, is accepted by men, because to their minds it explains the facts of the physical world.

The doctrine of immortality likewise is a theory, and men believe it because it explains the facts of the mental and moral world.

*First.*—Men are led to the conviction that the soul does not die with the dissolution of the body, from their beliefs regarding the *nature* of the soul.

It is manifestly and radically different from matter.

The latter is capable of being divided into parts, each having sides, circumference, and contents; whereas the soul is undivided and indivisible.

Being in itself a simple entity, its separation

into parts, or dissolution, as in the case of compound substances, is an impossibility; hence it cannot perish save by annihilation. And by virtue of its nature, being indestructible, there is no existing power except that of God which can destroy it, and we have no reason for believing that he will ever thus exercise that power.

We are conscious of a personality which is incapable of division; and that our individual self is not identical with nor dependent upon any part of the body.

For one or more of the bodily organs may be removed, and yet the dimensions of the soul will not be diminished thereby one iota.

We are told that the whole body undergoes a change in its material structure every seven years, or less; but the *ego*,—the personal *self*,—remains unchanged.

By means of the memory one can recall incidents which occurred in childhood, and yet since that time, according to science, the brain has been entirely renewed five times.

We may therefore ask, on *what* have those incidents *made* such a lasting impression, that the memory may call them forth after so long a time in all the minutiae of their original vividness?

Certainly it must be on something besides the brain; for the soul, or that which constitutes our personality, as we have already said, is not identical with any part of the body, nor with any of the organs of sense, but it acts independently of them.

We think most intensely when the eyes are oblivious to all outward objects, and the ear dead to all external sounds.

The mind continues its activity even while the body is asleep.

The soul perceives in dreams. Moreover, throughout a course of many years, from the age of thirty to that of sixty, the mind continues to grow stronger while the body grows weaker ; and very often in extreme old age, and at the moment of death, the soul will be clear in its perceptions, while the body is tottering and falling into dissolution. Now, if the soul is thus consciously *distinct* from the body, however intimately connected with it,—if it is an *undivided* entity, how can it be destroyed when the body dies? In order to become extinct a superhuman force must intervene and crush the spirit into nothingness. And what evidence of any kind or degree can be furnished to show that such will likely ever be the case?

We reply, not one *jot* of *evidence* of any kind, nor one single *analogy* from any source, because nature has taken the pains to demonstrate that *nothing* is annihilated, not even the smallest atom.

Science is very emphatic in its teaching upon this point.

We cannot even *conceive* of anything as being annihilated.

Even the body laid away in death is not annihilated.

It is only resolved into its chemical elements.

As far as observation goes, matter itself has a kind of immortality; it does not perish.

It only changes its form of manifestation.

It is true that we commonly speak of the growth and destruction of living things, such as trees, birds, and animals, but we thereby mean only a change in form.

Existing matter may be combined into new forms of life, and these may be dissolved, to be succeeded by new combinations of the same matter. The body of the dead animal when decomposed, nourishes the plant, which in its turn supplies nourishment for, and is absorbed by the system of *another* animal, and this animal in the course of time is resolved into its chemical elements by death, when the cycle begins over again as in the first instance.

It is *possible* that the prediction of the destruction of the world at the last day will be, as many believe, only a new disposition of the sum total of matter which now makes up the visible universe, when we shall have what is spoken of as "a new heaven and a new earth."

Matter has a practical immortality,—an immortality which would certainly place man's spirit, if it ceased with the death of the body, at a great relative disadvantage in the contrast.

If a man's spirit really perishes at death, then this higher part of his nature is much worse off than the chemical ingredients of his body, or of the bodies of the animals around him, since these do survive in new forms of life.

But man's spirit cannot be resolved like his body into form and material, the former perishing, while the latter survives.

Man's spirit either exists in its completeness, or it ceases to exist.

The bodily form of Abraham Lincoln has long since dissolved into dust. The material *atoms*, however, of which his *body* was composed during his lifetime, exist somewhere *now*; but if his memory, conscience, will, and all those faculties which constituted his mind and soul have perished, then the *spirit* of Abraham Lincoln has *ceased* to be.

There is no substratum either below or beyond these which could by any possibility perpetuate their existence. There is nothing spiritual to survive them, for the soul of man knows itself to be an indivisible whole—a something which cannot be broken up into parts and enter into union to form another soul, another mind. Each is distinct in itself, and can by no law of combination become another. The memory, the affections, the mode of thinking and feeling peculiar to the one cannot be transferred to another.

If they perish they perish altogether. There are no atoms to survive them, as in the case of the body, which can be worked up into another spiritual existence.

The extinction of an animal body or material form is only the extinction of that particular *combination* of matter, not of matter itself; but the

extinction of an immaterial soul, if such a thing were possible, would be the total extinction of all that ever constituted its being.

We cannot conceive of ourselves as passing over to others in any personal relationship whatever,—either in time, place or condition; neither can we conceive of ourselves as being reduced into non-existence. That our consciousness is at some time to wholly terminate, that this rational soul with all its grandeur of thought, holy affections, and noble aspirations, is to become dead and extinct, is an idea which our minds may think upon, but cannot formulate into a belief.

As the mind attains a more complete mastery over matter, as the power and dignity of thought become more fully recognized, and as civilization moves on in its progress, this inner consciousness of a relation to something beyond the present time, always grows stronger.

Science tells us that not *one* of all the forces in nature ever ceases; that light may, by mechanical action, be converted into heat; but that it does not thereby cease as a force. It informs us that when the lightning passes from our sight in the heavens, it has not gone out of existence.

How, then, can it be that this living and personal spirit in man, which utilizes the light in painting pictures on the plain plate, which captures the lightning and sends it whispering messages from land to land, through the sea, and around the world;—how is it that this living and

personal spirit, so superior to these natural and physical forces upon which it acts, should terminate, while they continue?

We cannot believe that it will; but rather that this soul-life, with its nobler impulses, and its far-reaching desires, is prophetic of an existence where its powers will have a far greater opportunity, for development and employment than they possess here.

It cannot be that death is more far-reaching in its power than life, so that *it* must have an eternity, and *we* only time, and that for so brief a period.

Are there no fountains in the soul which cannot be exhausted in this short life of ignorance, toil and sorrow?

The mind of man is conscious of the fact that each new effort put forth, instead of exhausting its powers, really enlarges them; and that if only the physical conditions which are necessary to continued exertion in the present state of things were not withdrawn, it would go on continuously, making larger and nobler acquirements.

So, too, we may infer the same thing respecting the soul, the conscience, and *all* the moral faculties of our nature; and since they are above and independent of mere physical conditions, there is no such thing as finality to them. The virtuous impulse of the soul is not like the life-principle of the tree or the animal,—a self-exhausting force.

On the contrary, it is always, even more consist-

ently than thought, moving forward—conceiving of and aiming at higher duties—understanding more closely that, advance as it may, it will not reach the limits of its possibilities.

The capacity of the soul for knowledge is in itself a suggestion of a life where the pursuit of knowledge may be continued.

The life we now have, looks forward to a future one as its complement. Assume a future life and see if it will not account for facts in the religious life of the world.

The argument which it introduces also settles beyond controversy many great scientific principles.

Assume that there is a future life, and that God has in some way given us instruction concerning it, and we have an excellent reason for our faith in it.

There is nothing in human *reason* that could delude us into that faith. We follow our friends to the tomb. Here experience stops, for we can follow our loved ones no further.

There is no other human experience which strikes such a terrible blow to our hopes of immortality as this.

But in the face of experience we still look up in the strength of faith, even through tears it may be, and say we shall live again.

Man, as a spirit reaches forward into future life, gazes wistfully at its uncertainties, maps it out, provides for it—at least, conditionally disposes of it.



Man, as a spirit, rises out of—rises above the successive sensations which, to an animal makes up its whole present life.

Man understands, in a measure, what it is to exist, as the animal can not. He understands his relation to other beings and to nature, which it does not.

And because of these facts he desires to exist beyond the present, in the future which he anticipates,—yea to exist in a very far distant future if it be possible.

The more his spirit improves itself, the more it develops its powers and resources, the more earnestly does it desire prolonged existence.

There is a realizing sense of a relation to life beyond the present, more or less profound in every people, we may say in every individual person.

Let us not forget the fact that God teaches up to a certain point through nature, reason and conscience, and just as truly as He teaches beyond it through His well-beloved Son.

This teaching of nature is presupposed by Christianity.

It is no true honor to our Master teacher, Jesus Christ, sent from God, that we lightly esteem this elementary instruction which God gives us through reason and conscience with a view of heightening the effect of Christ's work for man.

At the same time it is true that outside of the Jewish revelation, the immortality of man was not treated of by any very large number of men as being anything *like* a certainty.

But our Lord Jesus Christ assumed it as being most positively certain in all that He said with reference to a future life.

And it is His own resurrection—the tangible fact of His really surviving the collapse and pangs of death—which has in this, as in so many other ways, opened the kingdom of heaven in all the fullness of its meaning to believers.

Our Savior Jesus Christ having Himself conquered death, “hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

He brought to light the life beyond as an ascertained fact of man’s nature, although imperfectly apprehended until He died and rose again from the dead.

Christ did not make any *one* human being immortal any more than He invests any one with *reason*, or with *conscience*, or with *will*.

Immortality, like these other gifts, is a part of the original constitution of our nature, but our Lord has poured a flood of *light* upon its meaning and reality such as the world had never possessed before.

And what a *solemn* fact is the immortality of man, dimly apprehended by *reason*; but how *glorious* our conception of it as made certain by revelation!

From the open door of the sepulchre Christ has taught us the infallible *certainty* of the life beyond, into which He himself soon entered after His resurrection, ascending through the air, until

the cloud received Him out of the sight of men. He therefore brings to us the *reality* of those realms beyond, with which we can rest in confidence and be satisfied.

And we cannot think now of any human soul, bearing the image of His character here, but as being received at death into those immortal realms of light and life, where all is perpetual peace, joy celestial, and glory beatific.

When we accept the mission of Christ, and the doctrine of His atonement, resurrection and ascension into the heavens, those regions of superior life and bliss are as certain and as real to us as the existence of the other hemisphere, or as the continent, though well known perhaps, yet on which our eyes have never looked.

And it is a source of abiding consolation to the people of God while passing through the vicissitudes of this earthly life, to *know* that it will be better by and by. With them sorrow may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning.

The fact of a blissful immortality becomes a pillow under sorrow's aching head.

Friends in Jesus part at the tomb confident that they will meet again where sorrow is unknown, and where separations never come.

The fact of a future life not only gives increased value to the idea of salvation, but firmness and consistency to the whole range of Christian institutions and doctrines. Without a future life of personal consciousness our Christianity and its

teachings would all be nothing more than a heartless delusion.

Here, then, is the hidden meaning and *blessedness* which the thought of heaven brings to Christians amidst the painful events of life, even those events which fill our hearts with sorrow, and our lives with darkness, and from the shock of which we often feel that we could not otherwise recover, but for the soothing cordial which *heaven* offers to tranquilize our crushed spirits. With scalding tears the broken-hearted mother lays away in the cold grave her little child, a part of her very life; then to her the world seems lonely and desolate, the heavens as brass, and the earth as iron. But suddenly, as a message from above, there comes to her mind the words of the Lord Jesus—those words of sweetest consolation, saying, “Know ye not that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven?”

And then again, “*Suffer* the little *children*, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of *such* is the kingdom of *heaven*.”

And thus the mother's thoughts are transferred from her little one laid in the grave, and as if borne upward on eagles' wings, she now thinks upon its life as continued in those realms above, until she feels the reality of heaven, and the beauty and charm of its fair bowers as never before.

And ever thereafter, the household whence that little one was taken, has a sacredness and sweetness of hope in it which it otherwise could not

have possessed, but for the consciousness of heaven and a personal immortality.

So when *our* loved ones pass away from us ; so when misfortunes and distresses come upon us, it is this thought of the higher and better life beyond which comes to cheer and comfort us.

It also furnishes us with the divine philosophy of much which brings us sorest pain and unrest here.

The object of it is that we may become more enamored with what awaits us in the hereafter.

Very much of our interest in the great heroes of the past, centres, unconsciously perhaps, about the great truth of immortality.

Love asks, "What can we *do* for them?" Shall we pile granite, bronze, and marble above their graves, build statues in our streets and parks, and place memorial windows in our churches, and care for their dear ones left behind?

This would be nothing to them, if they are truly dead, and if the grave has received all that is left of their imperial spirits in the universe.

Are those affections, of which they were the centre and object, doomed to helpless sorrow for a few short years on earth and then to utter extinction?

Shall the aged Christian mother, as by faith she looks across the stream of death and views the shining portals of the New Jerusalem, of which her Bible gives such glowing pictures, be disappointed in not finding any conscious life beyond

the grave, much less any loving greeting from the glorified ones who have passed before her?

All that is profoundest and dearest in our souls, the deductions of the calmest reason, the instincts and prophecies of love, the imperative and incessant monitions of conscience, the echoes which come down to us from Indian, Grecian, and Hebrew heights, the accents of faith with which the greatest of our race have declared this universe to be the handiwork of God, who is good, and not the device of a monster; and all the tones of ecstatic hope which have come from the lips of dying Christians through sixty generations past, unite their voices and thunder forth an indignant "No!"—thus refusing to believe that God designed human life to be a bitter and cruel mockery to His children.

Immortality *alone* fills all the gaps in man's nature.

Immortality completes the imperative picture of his thought.

Immortality finishes up the fragment of his nature into a vase of celestial symmetry, the casting and glazing of God's own hand, and accounted worthy to hold His fairest and most fragrant spirit-flowers.

This may constitute a reasonable hope, but man wishes more—some fact that will insure its fulfillment.

Has *death* ever proven itself to life? Does history offer any hope for our comfort?

The Christian religion answers, "Yes." There stands before us the fact of an empty sepulchre, opened from within.

It is His, who liveth, and was dead, and behold He is alive for evermore. But are there to be no *others*?

Was His resurrection only an exception, or was it a type?

The answer which comes to these questions is, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

The founder of our Christian faith has presented us with ample proof of His power over death and the grave, and has *Himself* "become the *first-fruits* of them that slept."

Christ demonstrated forever His immutable vitality, when He rose from the dead, appeared to His disciples in the same bodily form, and finally ascended in it, until lost from mortal gaze in the light of heaven above.

And John, after he had witnessed that glorious spectacle of Christ's ascension, said, "*Now* I know, because *thou* livest we shall live *also*."

We cannot but live so long as thou livest."

Christ has indeed lifted us, in His own person, to the external paradise of God.

Therefore our immortality is *sure*. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

We belong to a realm over which death has no power; and hence when the hour of our appointed change comes, we can with the spirit of exultant

triumph, exclaim with Apostle, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brethren be ye *steadfast, unmovable*, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye *know* that your labor is not in *vain* in the Lord."



# IS THERE A GOD?

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## HIS BEING AND NATURE.

“The Being and Nature of God” is a subject which has exercised the mind of man from the hour that he first began to reason concerning his own origin and being.

This has been the problem of ages; the subject which has tried, and will continue to try the faith of countless numbers.

It will tax the highest powers of intellect, and occupy the most intent thought of humanity to the end of time. As man investigates the subject, he finds that the mystery only increases, and that what he seeks to obtain seems to recede more and more from him, until the difficulties he meets in his research, grow into unlimited proportions.

Although an investigation of the phenomena of being and nature brings forward more *convincing* evidences of the Being of God, yet under this clearer light the mind still feels itself too weak to comprehend this most magnificent fact of all facts. God is the ultimate limit of human reason and investigation.

The research of intellect, and the evidence drawn from a profound insight into nature, while they bring new manifestations of the *grandeur* of God, serve only to envelope man in deeper mys-

tery and *marvel* respecting His being and attributes.

The mystery which surrounds man's knowledge of God is often given as a reason for the denial of His being. But to deny the existence of facts, because man cannot understand or comprehend them, is to be false to the deductions of the profoundest reason, and to be mentally blind to those facts. The human understanding is hemmed in by boundaries over which it cannot pass.

Even the most familiar things in the great world of animal or vegetable life have their mysteries ; so intricate and delicate, so exquisitely concealed are they, that the mind is powerless to comprehend the simplest of them. To understand a mystery therefore, is to assume that man has a faculty for knowing the essence of being and the constitution of the manifold phenomena of the universe.

The very *mystery* of the being of God is a *proof* of His being, rather than a reason for the denial of it. It is very difficult to decide, in approaching this subject, whether to present it from the *simplest* point of view possible, or to attempt to argue *all* the questions in relation to it which has arisen in these modern times.

Each particular age has its own peculiar form of belief and of distrust. Our period, more than any other preceding it, perhaps, is making inquiry respecting the radical question of the existence of God. Two philosophies of the universe are placed

before the reflecting mind for consideration in our day. In the one, all that we see and are have been *developed* from a physical basis ; in the other, all that we see and are have been the product of a pre-existent mind.

Only a few persons have appeared in all history who felt willing to espouse the former theory ; but for reasons not possible to enumerate here, the vast majority of those who lived in this world have assumed the latter theory, viz : that to some conscious master mind must be conceded the power to produce what we call the universe.

There never has yet been any universally accepted definition of the creative mind. It is true that it has been vaguely expressed in Polytheism, in Monotheism and Pantheism ; but in *all* these philosophies their definition has been a *theory* only, and never able to pass beyond it.

Polytheism divides the creative mind into an army of deities, just as the word State comprehends a multitude of citizens.

Pantheism distributes the creative mind all through matter of every shape and form, and makes it that in a seed which causes it to grow ; that in a fish which sees and swims ; that in a bird which sings and flies ; that in a man which thinks, laughs and weeps.

According to this system, the various forms of the universe are but the outward manifestations of the impersonal, invisible God. In this definition, the maker and the thing made are confused and

blended together; so that the universe becomes the Creator, both in one. That invisible potency which pervades all things and upholds all things, whose presence is alike in the air, and in the rock, and in the human soul, Pantheism calls God.

And with *broad* conception of God, as the life and soul of the universe, Pantheists say God is everything and everything is God.

The distinction between the finite and the infinite is lost, and the unity that underlies the world and the substance of the world is wholly ignored.

God and the universe are unchangeably one, and inseparable.

Duration, space, matter and mind are fused together, so that the personal Being of God is destroyed; for as all the phenomena of the worlds are but parts of a necessary development, then God is only one of the ever unfolding energies of nature.

He is not a distinct *moral* being, because He is only a diffused essence; and matter is as much God as mind or spirit.

This theory not only denies Revelation, but contradicts human reason; for God's being is not one with nature, nor is it merged in nature. To avoid the absurdity to which Pantheism leads, matter has therefore been defined to be eternal.

Admitting this to be true, then there would of necessity be *two* eternities, and each not claiming authority over man but over each *other* as well. The world of matter and the world of spirit would thus become *rivals* of each other; for having eter-

nity alike, their claims would be the same in value and entitled to the same belief. The sublime truth then that God is one, and exists in and of Himself alone, and that He created all things, is thereby forever destroyed.

Now if these worlds are eternal, then they are self-existent and are unchangeable in their properties and qualities. But both science and observation tell us that the earth has changed, that the moon is the sepulchre of a dead past, and that the sun has lost a portion of its heat.

There have been periods of intense cold known as the glacial epoch, when the land was gathered around the poles. Then again there have been periods of intense heat when the land was gathered around the equator. The beds of the ocean were deprived of water and became mountain tops. Slowly and surely these changes have been going on, modifying the surface of the earth.

Now, if these changes take place, if any property of matter is modified in its substance or form, it cannot be eternal. But if God and matter are alike eternal and undetermined, and if God is the framer of the universe only as a necessary cause by which matter has been subjected to form and motion, then He is not an independent Being existing in and of Himself. This theory destroys the Infinitude of God, because He is only a part of something else, and therefore must be finite.

But it also declares that He is only the active principle of reason. Hence there is an unknow-

able intelligence without will or personality. The outward is but the robe in which it clothes itself. It may work with thought or without it, and manifest itself simply in the phenomena that meet the mind and the eye in the universe.

But again ; upon the theory under consideration, force and matter have been from the beginning and are eternal, and by mutual action and reaction they shape and will continue to shape and modify each other perpetually.

This leaves *no* God,—a conclusion in which we cannot contentedly rest ; but we must come to the result which true reason, harmonizing with Revelation, leads us, viz : that the Personal independent Creator called the universe into being by His own word of power, and that He is not a part of that which He created, but is God high over all.

The system of Polytheism, as we have already remarked, divides the Creator into many Gods. Unless these were manifestly pure, holy and just, which they were not, then there would be conflicts in authority, and anarchy and confusion would ensue. The inferior Gods would not yield to the superior, and hence there would be no one supreme authority to rule and govern the world.

Polytheism, born as it were of the thought of the manifoldness of operation in the universe, failed to see the unity which pervades all forms of creation, and which must have a supreme directing mind to maintain and control it.

In Greece and Rome, this system was simply

the deification of man's faculties and passions. Each faculty or passion had its own God. It was therefore only a form of the worship of humanity. It met and answered no need of the human heart. Its god had eyes, like the god of so much modern science, but they saw not; it had ears, but they heard not; it had a heart, but it felt not for the sorrows of humanity;—a mere force exerting mighty influences, it is true, but without any authority. The purity of their Gods was stained with passions and envy, hatred and malice; and they were without that holiness which alone can belong to a God who demands holiness in the heart and life of the individual.

*Again:* Chance is made by some to take the place of God. Hence this universe, with all its wonders, is but a consequence of the accidental coming together of atoms. These atoms like the germs in the doctrine of evolution, are not accounted for by this theory. All the order, beauty, and arrangement which we can see, know or conceive of, are but the result of a blind chance combining widely different elements. But if chance produce *this* order and beauty, why does it not give order and beauty in *other* things as well?

Order, proportion, adaptation, etc., are marks of design, and are evident in all things. There is uniformity in the working of nature,—an evident connection between all its parts; there is a relation of things exhibited which points not to chance, but to an intelligent will, and so there is

in all this a suggestion at least, that the worlds were not the product of a blind unconscious force which must itself be created.

Chance, if there be such a thing, is such as would be not the author of order, design, and adjustment, but of chaos and confusion. Something could not come of that which had no being. The only idea conveyed to the mind by chance, is that of disorder. The order and harmony of the world with all its complicated machinery, cannot be the result of disorder and confusion. Chance, then, has no place in the universe where order and harmony are found. For chance could not produce order, being itself disorder ; it could not produce law, being itself without law ; it could not formulate beauty, being itself chaos.

The worlds, therefore, which swing in the viewless air, the planets which move in majestic harmony through space, must have had their origin from one whose mind and wisdom planned, whose skill shaped them and all their motions, whose power sustained and gave them their glory. And this being is not a blind, aimless chance, but the living God.

*Fate* or Necessity is given by some as the cause of the universe. Others again have distinguished between *necessity* and *fate*. They say that fate is inferior to necessity, the one operating in the universe by secondary, and the other by primary causes. But these first causes, by their nature, were said to be only a diffusion of a supreme



power. Hence Nature was, according to this system, regarded as God. It resulted in the final denial of a personal God. It was *chance* ordered by an unbending law. All things were the outgoing of an irresistible destiny.

If fate therefore or necessity exercised wisdom, created, and formed, then they were a creator with other names than that of our God. One was equal with the other, and their very equality destroyed the supremacy of authority. We have now for *chance* or *Fate*, the doctrine of Evolution, which would do away with the being of a personal God.

This doctrine is in reality only the restatement, or at least a variation, of former theories. By evolution the lower types of being, through the operation of law, develop into the higher forms of being which we see. Atom has a force on atom, particle on particle, within the range of certain tendencies possessed by them, and so time passes on in its course, systems appear, and life is manifested.

By a continuation of this same process, the lines of division break these masses of life into races. The lower struggle up towards the higher forms, by the play of vital forces and physical conditions and favorable circumstances, until man appears, and then he in turn advances by the same law into the refinement of society and the culture of thought.

According to this view there is no place and no need for God. It takes away the idea of a creat-

ing mind, shuts out a sustaining providence, and denies that of which man is conscious, viz:—a spirit within him.

The weakness of this theory is apparent, for it goes back after all to germs already in existence ; and so it must either have a God to form these, or else these germs must have the power of self-creation or be eternal. But evolution can be traced in time ; all its development and transformations are governed by laws within the computation of time, and therefore its germs and work could not be in eternity. If not in eternity, then either infinities must be added to account for the variety of type and forms of life or being. And as evolution it must here either acknowledge the First cause to be God, or else pass away as an argument, or even a statement of the truth of creation.

But Huxley says that “living protoplasm” was evolved “from not living matter” and that it was “endowed” with “the power of determining the formation of new protoplasm.” This is what he calls “philosophical faith.” It is certainly a tremendous faith ! No Christian faith can compare with it. Something came from nothing ; life came from death ; or at least from non-living matter, and that without an agent or known cause !

A strange philosophy, and a wonderful reach of faith is that which is required of us by this system. And this thing so mysteriously born, we are told, was “endowed” with the power of reproduction. Endowed ! How ? By whom ? Whence came

this non-living matter, which had a cosmos in its womb, our philosopher does not condescend to inform us.

Not only does this theory fail to account for the first cause, originating matter and force; but it also entirely ignores the evidences of design and adaptation in all the works of creation. If a chain were let down from heaven containing many millions of links, there must be a first link grasped by some omnipotent hand, on which all the other links depend. If it could be shown that one link had been evolved from another, and that the chain had thus grown by natural processes, through myriads of ages, still the first link would be unexplained, and which must be accounted for. Without a God to order it, evolution is neither philosophical nor reasonable; for it lacks a conscious purpose. But with God to order its course and progress, to produce its first movement and life in the range of possibilities, it may be true.

There is a doctrine of evolution by which one thing is born of another, as the plant from the seed, the flower from the bud, the animal from the germ cell. Webster, in his definition of evolution, refers to Duglison as authority, and says it is "that mode of generation in which the germ is held to pre-exist in the parent, and its parts to be developed, but not actually formed by the pro-creative act."

This law is very important, for it is thus that every seed and every animal bringeth forth after

its kind, and the order of the universe is maintained.

But the Christian evolutionist holds that in every case the seed preceded the plant,—that evolution presupposes involution, and that powers are anterior to things. Dead matter cannot produce life. Life must be back of life. Organic life must have a creator, or it could not be organic life. A living force must have set it in motion in a living body.

The world then, and life, had a beginning; and being was given them by Him who is the intelligent author of creation and life. What are termed the laws of nature will not account for the origin of creation, nor for its preservation. Laws may be conditions of action, but laws are not determining forces. Law is not cause, neither is it a beginning; nor can science make it such, however *old* that law may be. For however far back science may go, it reaches at every step something which suggests a beginning or first cause. Pushing a law back to the remotest conceivable time does not serve to explain the law itself; for even there, without an intelligent cause, the mystery that confronts it at that point is as great as the mystery that confronts it in the present.

Law, time, force, space, may all be properties, so to speak, whose immensity of power we cannot calculate; but they do not for this reason create or produce the manifold phenomena of the heavens and the earth. No extent of time will

enable a law to create, no amount of force without an intelligent cause, will enable law to shape matter. Creation implies intention, design, conscious effort and a special end in view.

Time, force, law, and duration show no evidence that they possess will; and therefore they cannot be a cause. If law is eternal, the matter in which it works is eternal, and the same is true of original force. Hence, if there is not by a contradiction, an obedient inferiority, there could not be shape and formation in the systems of the world.

Now, laws have no meaning unless they have reference to a power higher than themselves. Laws need a power to formulate them,—to give them the force of authority, otherwise they are not laws. And this leads the mind to the sublime conclusion that God made laws and sent them forth with His authority and His control. The force which He gave, He sustains. It matters not how old the law may be, He is its author and it is law, because His power is stamped upon it. He is both its source and explanation. The same is true of force, time and space; otherwise they would have the quality of self-creation, and other infinite existencies would be added to other eternities.

Time, space, force and law, are parts of God's creation, as much as the material universe itself. But balancing and weighing these various theories of the world's creation, we have God's word asserting the fact, that He made all things.

## THE EXISTENCE OF GOD A NATIVE BELIEF.

The existence of God is a native belief, a constitutional conviction, an ultimate idea, a spontaneous faith, an instinctive perception, an axiomatic certainty of the soul. It is a truth lying wrapped up in our intuitions, or self-evident truths and axioms.

The fool can say in his heart there is no God, simply because the fool does not follow out his thoughts to the ultimate ideas enveloped in them. The moral fool will not yield to his moral instincts that he may thus find God.

If man looks at his own mind, he will perceive that it is a mind which formulates, contrives, balances, brings forces into play in the various movements in the mechanical world, harmonizes things wide apart and places them in positions which shall minister to taste, enjoyment or usefulness. From this he concludes that as his *own* mind shows consciousness and will, there is a mind of all minds infinitely conscious, with supreme will, which originated and set forth all that is in heaven and earth; a supreme intelligence which, as it sent them forth into being, still sustains them.

This idea of God has always existed and still does in the human mind, in every stage of its development, or else man's reason, instinct and consciousness are unreliable and cannot be trusted. Either it arises from the projection of man's

nature beyond itself to the supernatural ; or it is the reflection of the supernatural in the mirror of humanity, just as the sky and foliage on the banks of a lake, are reflected in its still waters. It is not true that every idea in man corresponds to some reality ; but no such general conception as this of God can exist without its counterpart, unless reason and conscience be themselves unreliable.

As to the choice between Theism and Atheism, reason says Theism ; reason decides that there is a God. How he exists and operates, or how he is related to all these moving worlds, and to our thinking minds, reason may not be able to understand, any more than the surgeon can locate the mind, or explain its connection with the body.

Not outside of nature, but in nature must we look for the operations of this all-controlling mind of God. Not as a being with literal hands and feet, with bodily parts, should we expect to see God ; but as intelligence manifested through nature, and as goodness revealed in the *larger moral order* and in our own hearts. The whole weight of reason, then, goes to support the Theistic supposition ; for reason offers, and can offer, not one argument against the existence of God.

If one can ever hope to reach the unknown at all by reason, it must be by reasoning from the known. The reason of God is seen in the reason of man, and in the intelligence everywhere manifested in his works. And now it is a fact that our reason has come to understand some small portion

at least of the reason of God as thus revealed. We have found out certain necessary truths.

We know, just as well as God knows, that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points ; and we know that two straight lines can not inclose space. We intuitively perceive that space is limited, and that duration is infinite. We have come to know the laws of proportion, of beauty, and of music. We have learned the principles of essential morals ; that right is right, and wrong, wrong. We perceive such moral qualities as justice, reciprocity, kindness and love. But in all this we have gone beyond the searching ; we have found God, we have found the name of God, have entered into it, and *hence have become a part of it.*

These laws of truth and love that are God—are forever. We have become a part of them—live in them and they in us ; hence we are forever. This one idea of God in the mind of man is the one unanswerable evidence of the existence of God. It is as easy by means of reason to understand that God is, as it is difficult to know what he is. The idea of God in man is a real and operative spiritual principle. There may be a consciousness of God which is not a knowledge *of Him in kind, like our knowledge in regard to matters of fact*, and yet it is the most real, because the most operative of all spiritual principles. Conscience gives practical force to the innate idea of God. Man believes in God because God reveals Himself to his con-



sciousness. Conscience is the echo of the divine voice of command.

What is the instinct of awe and sense of obligation found in every breast, but the testimony to some higher and superior power? As an echo implies some preceding sound, so do the whispers of conscience imply the inner voice of the Great spirit.

The instinct of observation is active when we are separated from all human government and society. We cannot imagine ourselves to be free from this responsibility, even if all other human beings were swept out of existence; for we know that we are amenable to a Power outside of ourselves. In the nature of things this implies that the Power to which we are answerable knows what we do and what we ought to do; approves the right and disapproves the wrong in us, and not only has the power but purposes to reward or punish according to our character and conduct.

How beautifully is the office of conscience set forth in the *ring*, which according to an Eastern legend, a great magician presented to his prince! The gift was of inestimable value, not for the diamonds and rubies and pearls that gemmed it, but for a rare and mystic property in the metal. It sat easily enough on the finger under ordinary circumstances; but so soon as the wearer formed a bad thought or wish, designed or concocted a bad action, the ring became a monitor. By suddenly contracting, it pressed painfully upon the finger, thus warning him of his sin.

What the ring of that fable was to the prince, conscience as the voice of God, becomes within us ; it is His law written upon the "fleshy tables of the heart."

There is a disclosure of God which comes home to man with more convincing power than all the marvels of the material universe. It is the existence of a moral law in the mind which declares with authority the supreme fact of duty, and of moral obligation, expressed by the words, "I ought, and I ought not to do this or that. There is then within us a witness, a judge, an executive, which by reason of its promptings and decisions makes us a law unto ourselves. We have a faculty by which we perceive the difference between right and wrong. We have an inner eye which looks upon some acts as good and others evil, some pure and others vile. We have a conscious conviction that we ought to choose the right and shun the wrong. And according as we voluntarily prefer the one or the other, our action is always followed with a sense of personal approval or disapproval.

Now the question is, Whence came this power of perceiving moral distinctions? Who gave us the feeling that the right should be chosen? And how does it happen that there is fixed to this moral law a system of rewards and penalties, and I may say, including the spontaneous and universal conviction that when we choose the right or the wrong, there is some one above us also who approves or disapproves?

What is the explanation of these facts and convictions? If we ask History, she answers, God. The moral law written on the heart is one of the sources and occasions of all religion. If we ask Philosophy what it means, she repeats her sublime axiom, that every effect must have an adequate cause. The moral law is a stupendous effect, and only the rudest sensationalism has denied that it points, together with all lower effects to the great first cause. Conscience, the organ of the moral law—the faculty by which it works—is an original part of our nature. The perception and feeling that the right should be chosen and the wrong avoided are the results neither of parental instruction nor of human legislation.

Congresses and Parliaments make laws, but they do not make nor can they unmake the moral law. It existed before all human statutes. There is a Parliament older than the English *Magna Charta*. There is a Congress older than the earliest American Assembly. There are laws more ancient than the twelve brazen tables in the Roman forum, or than the two granite slabs of Mount Sinai even. There is the soul of man, with its original sense of right and wrong, out of which all righteous legislation has flowed.

Who first enacted that right is right, and declared that wrong is evil? We know that these distinctions are not fashioned by men, like weapons of war or style of dress. We can neither make nor unmake moral distinctions. They exist,

as we say, in the nature of things. Thus a law so absolute as the moral law, lifts us far above the possibilities of men, and has its seat in the bosom of God.

Man's moral instincts as much indicate a higher moral ruler as the mechanical instincts of the inferior creatures indicate a guiding intelligence superior to those creatures. We investigate the instincts of the ant, and the bee, and the beaver, and discern in all how they are led by an inscrutable agency to work toward a distant purpose. Let us be faithful to our scientific method, and investigate those instincts of the human mind also, by which man is led to work as if the approval of a Higher Being were the aim of life.

Conscience is a moral sense—bidding men act from moral motives. We may hold erroneous opinions, and be guilty of not having conscientiously formed those opinions. I may have a wrong idea of what is benevolent, or just, or pure in a given instance, but I know that benevolence, justice, and purity ought to be always followed. I may not know whether my opinions are correct absolutely, but I do know this in every case—that whether I act from an holy or an unholy motive—conscience always enjoins upon me to choose with a right intent.

When any man decides not to be active in diffusing the light of the Gospel among men, and setting forth the terrors of the law before the guilty and depraved in society, he knows very distinctly

whether he is governed by a right motive or not. When we so arrange our time that we have leisure for multiplied diversions of a carnal nature, and little opportunity for zealous activity in Christian efforts, we know whether or not we are governed by a holy intention. In all deliberate choices we know infallibly whether we mean right or wrong. There is an unhushed voice within bidding us choose from holy motives, and it carries us to the realm of the superhuman.

The power of conscience is an index within us pointing to a Ruler without. Hence we have in this fact an internal proof of a Deity arising from conscience, which amounts to the fullest declaration of the power of God, and is the most complete promulgation of His law to mankind. The power of conscience is the supreme authority in all conditions and stages of the world, and it is the divine witness within. The voice of conscience is the voice of absolute authority. There is an innate force and power in it compels men to belief and reverence.

Conscience reigns supreme over all the other faculties of human nature. Neither can we conceive of anything above it—not the whole universe—not even God.

On the other hand we cannot conceive of God as arrayed against it. If then, nothing can be superior to conscience, not even God, and He cannot be conceived as being arrayed against it, is there not sufficient reason in the general human convic-

tion that the author of all things is Himself behind or in it, speaking through it, and giving it this supreme authority ? This moral sense reveals God to man. This consciousness expresses itself in will, just as intelligence, reason and mind, precede and express themselves in contrivance, order and law.

This conviction of a God voices itself in the conscience, and in this way exercises an imperial sway over man's entire nature. This conscience in which God manifests Himself, and through which He speaks to us, occupies a position in relation to all our other faculties, like unto a king sitting among his vassals ; and the principalities and thrones of man's sensuous nature bow down to do it homage. It is the arbiter of his acts, the judge of his motives,—the voice of God from which we dare not turn aside, or refuse to obey.

As mind is not the product of matter, so conscience is not the development of instinct. It is not a self-creation, whatever other grandeur of power there may be in self. It is neither the emanation of a glorious imagination, nor the result of all the mental faculties combined. No doctrine of evolution apart from a personal God,—no theory of plants developing into animals or their higher type denominated man, has *ever* been able to show *how* the combinations of rain and wind, sunshine and dew, or the more subtle energy in the growth of either plant or animal have developed themselves in the human soul, with a conscience yearning after God.

Why cannot a stone carved into the image of a man by the artist, take to itself under the power of tendencies, those faculties of thought, will, and spirit, which together with all those other innate powers in man, constitute each individual being in our common humanity? Subject it to air and moisture, to light and heat, or plant it in the soil; let it be surrounded by all the elements of nature, and then let it develop into an infant or grown up man with all that term implies. It can never do it.

The lifeless statue can not develop into a deathless immortality, a personal spirit, because the *principle* of life has not been imparted to it by God. But the living spirit crieth out for the living God who thus created and endowed it.

Bacon said, He would sooner believe in all the fables of the *Talmud* and of the *Koran*, than to believe that this universe is without beneficent guidance."

The soul is a richer and ampler illustration of its divine Creator than all the splendors and mighty wonders of the celestial bodies. If God be a delusion, then all the instincts and aspirations of our human nature are wrong, and unexplained; but this we can hardly believe to be possible.

On the other hand, the consonance of nature with the intellectual and physical needs of man strongly prove the divine authorship. All those nobler things for which man longs are supplied. He aspires to power; and step by step, as his capacities enlarge, he obtains the mastery of the

universe. He thirsts after knowledge; and he is permitted to drink deep from the springs of wisdom. He has a love for the beautiful; and everywhere his eyes may feast on the mysteriously wrought fabric of nature. He cannot live without affections; and none are so humble and poor in this world, but that he finds either parents, wife, children or friends to strew *flowers* along life's thorny pathway, making his journey more cheerful, fragrant and happy.

Sadder than any other earthly calamity that could befall us is that cruel perversity of nature or of education which would seek to eliminate the idea of a personal God from the human soul. Very much of our present intellectual life and human philosophy serve only to weaken, adulterate, or as in many cases, to wholly eradicate the idea of God from the mind of man.

In illustration of this point, the autobiography of John Stuart Mill is one of the saddest records of a life which was spent without divine consultation, prayer or hope of an eternal life. Its pages reveal how from his tender childhood up, his father had taken pains to eliminate God from his son's mind, and to stifle within him every aspiration in the direction of religious thought. Science *alone* was to be this youthful scholar's nature; the result was that at an age when most youth are hardly *beginning* their more advanced studies, young Mill had already mastered the great bulk of classic lore.



But no truly sensitive man can read the pages which narrate these early mental struggles of an unusually endowed mind, such as his, without exclaiming: "O God, save me from my own self!" The complete ascendancy of the parental instructor and moulder of Mill's character is seen on every page of his autobiography. Is it to be wondered at, therefore, that the boy, motherless as he was, became a mere godless reasoning machine, a splendid machine of its *kind* it is true, yet only a machine, with that subtler, finer, gentler breath of life wanting? But a day came that formed a crisis in his mental career. After storing his capacious brain with a wealth of information, obtaining wisdom from the study of long forgotten volumes, young Mill put to himself these questions, What is all this learning for? Does it satisfy all the longings of my nature? Does it harmonize my inner life? Is it enough to live for? And he made answer to all these questions in the negative.

In vain he sought during these hours of doubt, discomfort, and discouragement, to obtain consolation from his favorite authors.

Finally he escaped from the mental shackles with which his father bound him in narrowness.

He sought the companionship and friendship of Coleridge, John Sterling, Morris and Wadsworth.

They complemented his present mental attainments by supplying his emotional needs.

The truth is that John Stuart Mill was unconsciously, yet necessarily, the son of eighteen centuries of Christianity.

A life like his could not be led by a pagan of pagan times.

His devotion to mankind, his brave struggles for the human welfare, were, without his knowledge, the product of Christian ideas and Christian practices, and these generated by the influence of his chosen friends.

Then commenced a third period in the history of his life.

The strong ties of twenty years of pure and hallowed friendship culminated in the more sacred bonds of matrimony. His own testimony of his wife is, that her mind included Carlyle's and infinitely more.

To her he rendered unwillingly, and unstintingly, all the praise which he denied to God.

Of her he afterwards wrote in a way which Paul as a persecutor, might have written of the Savior.

But the idyl of their marriage lasted only seven and a half years ; when she died.

His loss, he said, left a void within which nothing else could fill.

Restlessly he went from her grave, in sunny Avignon, to foggy England and then back again.

He had no God, but made a god unto himself ; and that is the meaning of this beautiful devotion of his to his wife. He lived in the future merely to love her purposes.

Her memory became his religion now, as her love had been his religion before. Mill's sad life, beginning and ending without God, spent only in

deifying his wife, until she was swept away like a leaf before the autumn winds, and the beautiful palace of his joys and hopes was crushed and shattered by pitiless fate, is in itself a proof of God's existence.

All knowledge is futile if it fails to satisfy the needs of our nature ; and, therefore, all those whose minds are racked by doubt, and whose faith is shaken, rather than settle down in this hopeless condition, ought to listen to their higher aspirations,—to the infallible instinct which teaches them there is a God.

A consciousness of God is one of the primary and fundamental intuitions of the human mind.

We have ample evidence that belief in God actually has that relation to the human mind, which we call instinctive or intuitive, in that it springs up from, or roots itself in the consciousness, and ever takes the firmer hold, in proportion to the growth of man in the higher characteristics of humanity. We infer from our own consciousness of will, a supreme originating will ; from our intelligence, a supreme constructing mind ; from our idea of morality, a supreme Law-giver, who is the author of morality ; and from the spirituality of our nature, a supreme God, the "Father of spirits."

Thus we find that the instinctive inference of a personal God is woven into the very texture of our nature.

"There is a spirit in man, and the Almighty giveth him understanding." This spirit within has

the power of spiritual discernment which the natural man cannot have.

By means of this spirit man is revealed to himself, and through it God reveals Himself to man.

This is the faculty within us, by means of which we take cognizance of the supernatural,—by which we apprehend Deity.

Truth, goodness, purity and righteousness, which are qualities of the divine character, are made known by the Eternal Spirit to the human spirit; and it recognizes these as qualities superior to itself.

Man knows that he did not and could not originate them of himself; and he is likewise conscious of the fact that he apprehends them by his spirit.

It is thus that the highest part of human nature answers to the divine nature.

There is in man a likeness of God,—a likeness the most real, however dimmed and blurred it may have become from the effects of evil.

This likeness exists because God is the Father of the spirit, and the image of the parent is thus transmitted to man as his offspring.

The spirit then is the reflection of God's attributes; and it is by means of this that he arrives at a conclusion of what God as a Spirit is.

All our knowledge of the material, mental, and spiritual realms, comes to us through the senses, the mind, and the spirit, as the appointed means of knowing.

Man lives, with a faith or confidence in the

things that are above and about him. By means of these he becomes the receptacle of knowledge and emotions, as a result of what he sees, fears and touches, and upon which he projects his thoughts.

Man's religious nature is as real as his physical nature; and the one implies a spiritual as much as the other implies a physical world.

As light proves the existence of a cause corresponding thereto and producing it, so man's religious instincts prove the existence of something as a cause corresponding to them.

As the eye implies light, to which it is by nature adapted, so too the religious instincts of the soul, man's inner eye, imply the existence of a divine Being adapted to their nature.

That our religious instincts are as truly a part of our nature as our appetites and nervous system, is a fact which all experience establishes beyond question; and it forms one of the strongest proofs of the reality of that spiritual world unto which the soul, or man's religious nature, continually aspires.

This conscious belief has been the inspiration of all that is purest in man's achievement, and of all that is most tender and loving in his affections.

It exists as the true element of his noblest being, and as the truth upon which the whole magnificent structure of his work most securely rests.

And it is by reason of this analogy between the physical and spiritual nature of man that he, in

one sense, comes to know God and apprehend Him, though not in the fullness or perfection of His highest nature,—which conception in knowledge, power and faith, corresponds to body, soul and spirit.

As design in nature is a witness for God, so is the *longing* for God which exists in the spiritual nature of man. This deathless aspiration ever rising up, ever reaching out towards God, is one of the strongest arguments and proofs of His Being.

That there can be an idea formed within the mind without a reality of some kind to which it corresponds, or an aspiration of the soul for that which has no possible existence, is not only contrary to all experience, but difficult even to conceive.

And not only so ; but it follows that if there is no God answering to the idea of such a Being universally prevalent in mankind, then all this yearning of the soul would not only prove a fruitless delusion, but the mere aspiration of despair.

Life would be the existence of an effect without a purpose, and the end would be darkness or negation.

All the wealth of trust, the purity of reverence, and the strength or adoration in the first writers of God's word centred and found their highest object in God, as an ever living personal Jehovah.

God, we are told, is a Spirit ; that He is immaterial, without bodily organism, and without shape or form.

God is not matter, although he acts upon matter. He is a spirit ; His existence is altogether spiritual.

He is infinite ; but not an infinite material thing, for then He would so fill all space that there would be no room for the existence of any other being or thing.

God is infinite, because He needs no space or time for development. He is neither multiplied by the duration of time, nor enlarged by the extent of space.

Being perfect, He knows no growth and no laws which guide His progress and development, as is the case of man.

All space is open to Him, although He cannot be said to dwell in space ; but being unlimited in extension He is present everywhere. He is eternal, omniscient and omnipotent.

He is without beginning or end. As he was before all things, the cause and author of them, so also is He in every sense superior to them. "He is the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity."

He contains in Himself all that is, hence He is the knowledge and measure of His own being.

All things acknowledge His power, and from the centre to the circumference of the universe He silently and majestically holds them all under His supreme control.

The whole universe proclaims with its ten thousand voices that there is a God, of whom are all things, and for whom all things consist ; and who

guides all things with a wise and holy purpose to immortal issues.

#### DESIGN AS A PROOF OF GOD'S EXISTENCE.

When we look abroad over the world, we see everywhere manifested the tokens of harmony and order.

We recognize them in the unerring movements of the planets, as they glide silently through the heavens above us,—in the tides of the sea, as they ebb and flow with measured regularity ; in the periodic change of seasons, and day alternating with the night ; and it is so throughout the vegetable world in all its manifold forms and transitions.

So assured, and so constant is this principle in all its manifestations, that reason can arrive at but one just conclusion, viz:—that order is the primary constituent and force governing all things.

Adaptation, adjustment, and contrivance are everywhere visible to the eye of investigation.

Nature seems to stand forth, like a messenger sent from God, as it were, holding in her hands so that all may see, the convincing proofs of order and law.

For the intelligent mind, there is therefore no escaping the conclusion that the whole universe is under the direct and personal control of an omnipotent power.

Life not only proclaims an anterior life from



which it was generated ; but matter in all its forms gives evidence that some antecedent power must have produced it, and that it did not and could not originate in itself.

The common sense of mankind, by means of its experience through the long ages past, and by a steady cumulative force, has acquired the conviction, that this world, so full of design, beauty, and the evidences of power, must have had an adequate and sufficient cause.

And no cause can be conceived of as a sufficient one, except that of an omnipotent and omniscient God. Design is seen in all forms of matter.

How beautiful in its proportion, delicate in its adjustment, and wonderful in its arrangements, from the insect that sports in the summer air to the heavens with their splendid host ; from the dust atom, with its microscopic squares and angles to the brain of man, with all its convolution of machinery for the mysterious power of thought !

Step by step the mind traces the workings of law, and discovers harmony and progress in all its operations. Various as are the lines of divergency, they all have their origin in one central unity.

The earth beneath our feet, and the firmament above, gilded with its letters of light and beauty, read out to us in plainest language their lessons of causation and order.

All this shows unmistakable evidence of thought and will ; it portrays an intelligent mind that

can both design and carry into shape and form what it has conceived.

But many persons have said the argument from design is old, and that it is not a tenable one.

Let us examine it and see.

Suppose a mariner out upon the far away seas, and the only survivor of the shipwrecked crew, should find himself floating upon a plank until drifted by the tide he finally lands upon a desolate island.

His first disappointment is in finding no evidence of any person's having ever been there *before* him. Then seized with a feeling of despair, akin to that from which he had just escaped upon the waters, he wanders about the island in earnest *search* for some such token, in the hope that if discovered he may be *released* from this lonely exile into which he has been so unexpectedly brought.

In roaming about its solitude, his eye suddenly falls upon an object, which, upon kicking with his foot, he finds to be square in form, and of a hard substance.

On lifting it up in his hands, he perceives it is heavy like metal; and upon further examination he discovers that it is a box, with a key attached to it.

Curiosity leads him to apply the key to the only opening in the box capable of receiving it, which being successfully done, he gives it a few turns at random, when lo! the familiar tune of "Home, Sweet Home" rings out from its little prison-cham-

ber. What does he necessarily infer from this experience ?

Why simply this ; that some human being has been there and dropped that mysteriously constructed box, although he may never have seen anything of that description in his life before.

It never occurs to him for one moment that it came there of itself, or by chance ; neither that it grew out of the ground, or was left there by wild beasts ; but his conclusion is that a man has been there and dropped it.

And why ? Because, upon scrutinizing its mechanism he finds in it the evidence,—at least an evidence which convinces his own mind beyond the possibility of doubt—that there has been intelligence—human intelligence, adaptation and contrivance in the construction of this instrument.

Moreover he is persuaded that it was some *person* who had been there and left this box behind him, and also that the tune it played was not the result of a mere accident, because he hears the tune of “ Home, Sweet Home ” which he had heard sung many times before.

He therefore believes the person to have been one who was familiar with a race and class of people similar to his own ; one too of like character and experience with himself, else that particular box would not have been selected by him, which left behind, played this old familiar tune.

The conclusion to which he comes is the most natural one that could be formed from the peculiar

contrivance of that box, and the music it produced.

To this we might add Paley's old illustration drawn from the watch. But Huxley says, that this famous illustration only establishes Darwin's theory.

He says, the adaptation of all the parts of the watch to the function or purpose of showing the time, is held to be evidence that the watch was specially contrived to that end, on the ground that the only cause of which we know competent to produce such an effect as a watch which shall keep time, is a contriving intelligence, adapting the means directly to that end.

Suppose, however, that any one had been able to show that the watch had not been made directly by any person, but that it was the result of the modification of another watch which kept time but poorly, and that this again had proceeded from a structure which could hardly be called a watch at all, seeing that it had no figures on the dial and the hands were rudimentary ; and that, going back and back in time we came at last to a revolving barrel as the earliest traceable rudiment of the whole fabric.

And imagine that it had been possible to show that all these changes had resulted, first, from a tendency of the structure to vary indefinitely, and secondly, from something in the surrounding world which helped all variations in the direction of an accurate time-keeper, and checked all those in other directions ; then it is obvious that the force of Paley's argument would be gone.

For it would be demonstrated that an apparatus thoroughly well adapted to a particular purpose might be the result of a method of trial and error worked by unintelligent agents, as well as of the direct application of the means appropriate to that end by an intelligent agent.

It might be answer enough to all this, simply to say, that the supposition is absurd, and the realization of it impossible,—and therefore does not contain the first principle of an argument.

But let us look at it a little in detail. The “revolving barrel” in the watch must stand for the primal order of things in the universe.

But how came this “barrel” into existence? How did it become a “revolving barrel?”

If in existence, and having a determinate motion, does not that prove a maker, and a specific design in its construction?

Even in this rudimentary form does not the watch answer the design of Paley’s illustration?

Does it not prove special contrivance for some special purpose?

But granting the watch to be only “the result of the modification of another watch which kept time poorly ;” yet, in the first place, the *other* watch would have to be accounted for in some way, and by this course of reasoning the difficulty is not *removed*, but only pushed one step farther backward.

And secondly, the construction of an accurate chronometer from a watch which kept time but

poorly, would demonstrate not only *design* in the maker, but positive intelligence and *skill* also.

Then too, we are asked by this scientist and philosopher to "imagine" that all the conditions were favorable to produce variations in the right direction, and to check them in every other direction.

Well we may be able to "*imagine*" all this, even with respect to "the organic world," and we need to imagine a great deal in order to explain a universe existing without design, worked by "unintelligent agents," and exhibiting nowhere any evidence of a commanding purpose.

But science has to deal with existing facts, and not with dreams of imagination.

A "tendency" in the structure of things to vary indefinitely has never been shown, because never discovered.

The fact to be proven is boldly taken for granted, which is this, that changes *are* produced by such a "tendency," and not by the presence and power of the Creator.

The supposition of "something in the surrounding world" to check adverse and to secure favorable conditions is an unwarranted assumption.

When Prof. Huxley asks us to accept a cosmos which is the result not of an intelligent first cause, but of "a method of trial and error," we respond to him in his own words, and say that "we have a way of looking upon belief which is not based on evidence, not only as illogical, but immoral."

His system not only denies a personal God, but degrades man.

It is "the gospel of dirt," and beyond it are despair and death.

There is no logical escape from this argument of design.

The marks of intelligence and design are seen all around us, in everything; the evidence is indelibly stamped upon the face of all nature.

No sooner do we open our eyes upon the great world without us, than we recognize what seems to be unmistakable signs of a designing and controlling mind everywhere.

In testimony of this fact, says a certain writer, "It happened one day about noon, when going towards my boat, I was exceedingly surprised by the print of a man's bare foot on the shore, which was very plain to be seen in the sand. I stood like one thunderstruck; I listened, I looked around me; but I could hear nothing nor see anything.

I went up to a rising ground to look farther; I went up and down the shore; but it was all one. I went to the print again, to see if there were any more, and to observe if it might not have been mere fancy; but there was no longer room for doubt, for there was the exact print of a foot,—toes, heel, and every part of the foot in clearest outline. How it came thither I knew not, nor could in the least imagine; but after innumerable fluttering thoughts, like a man utterly confused,

and out of myself, I came home to my fortification, not feeling as we say, the ground I went on, but terrified to the last degree,—looking behind me at every few steps, mistaking every bush and tree, and fancying every stump at a distance to be a man.”

The circumstance thus graphically described, although granting it to be a fictitious one, admirably illustrates the natural workings of the human mind in such cases.

Robinson Crusoe witnessed an effect, the cause of which was unknown to him ; but from the nature of that effect he was able to reason back to its true cause. He could not help concluding that the foot-print upon the sand was produced by a human being.

The result would be the same with all ; nor should anyone be blamed for the inference so legitimately drawn. In the instance above cited, the marvel was not in the fact that a human foot had left its print upon the sand, for this is natural and of frequent occurrence ; but the whole of the marvel was caused by the peculiar circumstances. The presence of a man in that locality, other than the beholder, was neither known nor suspected ; but the presence of a foot-print proved beyond doubt that another man had been there.

Just in the same manner the hunter looking for the traces of wild beasts, decides that they have been where their tracks are visible ; and not only so, but he decides what kind of animals they were.



So too, the geologist, who finds far below the earth's surface, upon what is now solid rock, the foot-prints of birds and quadrupeds, never hesitates to say that they were produced by this or that kind of living creatures, although these foot-prints are the only kind of evidence he can possibly obtain of their having existed.

In all cases we refer effects to causes or agents, and we endeavor to ascertain the character of an agent or given cause from the nature of the effects which are visible.

When we see an hospital, or any other institution intended for the relief of the sick man and the wants of the poor and distressed, we see at once a work of power, of intelligence and of benevolence. We judge of it by the nature of the effects which it produces.

So too, when we look upon the physical universe lying all around us ; we behold in every part of it the impress of God, and are enabled to discern something of the character of His mind and purpose in all.

In the glories of the clear blue sky, and in the wonders of the earth beneath ; in the countless varieties of the vegetable world, and in the myriad forms of animal life ; in every scene of natural beauty spread out before us, and in every provision made for existence and perpetuity of all these, we recognize the power, wisdom and goodness of the Creator.

There is not a single *star* that gems the azure

heavens by night, not a flower that adorns the soil of hill and dale breathing forth its fragrance in sweet-scented air, and not a luscious fruit that affords nourishment to any living creature, but distinctly whispers to us of a God.

The seasons as they run their beneficent cycles round, bringing forth in turn both storm and calm, sunshine and rain, winter frosts and summer's heat, ripening the rich harvests of fruit, grain and vegetables for the sustenance of every earth-born creature, are all eloquent in their testimony to us of a divine order and plan.

The solid earth with its wild, massive mountain ranges, and winding valleys robed in green ; the great oceans with their solemn swell and roar, the stately flowing rivers, leaping streams and dancing rills, all testify with united voice of an Almighty architect whose mind conceived and whose hand built up the majestic structure of our globe.

When one looks into a clock and sees the motion of the wheels, the striking of the hammer, and the hanging of the plummets, he says that some skillful artificer made it and thus adjusted all its parts into this order.

So when we see the excellent order and harmony which is manifest in the universe ;—the sun dispensing its light and heat through all nature, without which the world would be but as a dark grave or dismal prison ; the rivers sending forth their silver streams to refresh the thirsty land with moisture ;—and in like manner when we see every

other creature acting within its special sphere and keeping within its own appointed bounds, we must acknowledge that there is a God who wisely orders and controls all these things according to His own sovereign will.

When we consider this world and all parts of the known universe, which we in these modern times have succeeded in reaching by the aid of chemistry, astronomy, &c., we see that there runs through them all such an amazing and exquisite adaptation of means to ends, that we are compelled to say, here is evidence of design, of will, of mind, and of benevolence—an evidence of omnipotent, omniscient power.

And yet this argument is not sufficient to satisfy the mind of every one; but those who will not be convinced by all these means of illustration and analogy, we must be content to leave where they are, yet not without the prayer that God may open the eyes of their understanding and bring them into the glorious light. Those who do not see in the world of nature any evidence that all its parts have been constructed with some purpose in view, act upon quite another principle when man and not God is the subject under consideration.

Let them hear a musical instrument and they at once believe, without questioning the fact, that it had a maker, and that some one is playing upon it, although they may never have seen the one, nor now see the other.

Show them a beautiful poem like the *Iliad*, and

they believe it to have an author, although they never saw him and have no proof of his existence, except that of his work.

Let them discover a marble statue on a desolate island, and they will instantly decide that it was executed by some artist.

They will not only perceive that all these things are works of art, requiring more or less of genius, but that in each case the author had a design which is plain and distinct.

The musical instrument was made to produce music ; and it is therefore played upon to give pleasure in the rich harmony of sounds.

The poem was written both to instruct the mind and to gratify the æsthetical taste ; and hence it is read with interest and delight.

The statue was meant to represent a person or thing, and to serve as an ornament ; and so it is greatly admired.

The painting was intended to convey some idea or conception taken from human form, and to please the eye with a transcript of the beautiful in nature ; and hence it is viewed with ecstacy and enchantment.

Every work executed by man is recognized as his work, and as having some purpose or intention.

All this the Atheist sees, but he refuses to admit that his own eyes, ears, hand, heart, lungs, nerves, and brain, exhibit any traces of intelligent design.

He admits their peculiar fitness for their office, but he denies that they owe their fitness to the

wisdom and goodness of God in so constructing them.

He owns that they are beautiful in their structure, arrangement, and working, but sees no reason for tracing this beauty and harmony to an All-wise Maker.

He confesses that they minister to his comfort, safety and preservation, but says this does not convince him that they were designed for that purpose by a beneficent Creator. They are a phenomena of matter, he says, and this is all he knows about them ; and that for anything he can tell, they may have been from eternity, or they may have begun in consequence of some new development of matter.

Heaven and earth, with their myriad voices, tell him nothing of God.

The harmony of the universe, with all its rolling spheres, is a silence without any meaning to him.

The magnificent frame-work of nature, with all its carefully adjusted parts, never suggests to his mind even the idea that it had an all-wise, almighty and all-bountiful Creator, and is sustained, controlled and perpetuated by the will of Him who made it.

Notwithstanding all these vast effects, teeming from every conceivable source, yet he still avows himself unable either to find evidence of an intelligent cause, or to see that one is necessary.

We have often heard infidels say, that whatever may be the causes or effects which we see in na-

ture, we cannot refer them to a living, personal, and intelligent Supreme Being.

The argument from design or final causes, they declare to be of no value ; because there are alleged irregularities, inconsistencies and imperfections in nature.

That such peculiarities lurk within the hidden nooks and by-ways of the physical world, in the fringes and on the outskirts of nature, it may in a sense be true ; and yet, as compared with the broad expanse of natural phenomena, which fall under human observation, they are like the mere specks and flaws on a smooth polished surface, which can only be detected by means of a magnifying glass.

Has the uncovered, fair face of this wide world become so blurred and disfigured by these minute irregularities, that order, adjustment, and beauty can no longer be discerned in it ?

As well might it be argued by these cavilers that a magnificent palace, with its stately chambers and gorgeous decorations, was nothing more than a freak of chance, or an ill-framed mass of rubbish, *because* an apparently useless closet or two might be found within it, or here and there a stone seemingly out of place, or a handful of unsightly dust lying in some of its corners or unused rooms.

If there be irregularities in nature, they only imply regularities to which they are an exception.

This proves the rule, or to say the least, rather proves the existence of a ruler ; else what seem to

us as irregularities, would soon result in endless confusion and ruin.

The difficulty which the Atheist experiences in tracing an intelligent design in the creation and government of the world, is far less than that which meets him in the study of what are termed providential dispensations.

But if we regard the universe as under a just and righteous Ruler, as well as being in itself the production of an all-wise, bountiful, infinitely mighty Creator, we shall then have discovered a clue to *some* of those events at least, which overwhelm men and nations with calamity.

We conclude, therefore, that the evidences of design and of a great first Cause in the universe, are sufficiently numerous to confirm our faith in God, and to assure us that He is wise and powerful, just and good.

In leaving with our readers this part of our subject, we desire to repeat, that God's existence and personality are as clearly exhibited in the universe as they could possibly be, and yet come within the comprehension of finite minds.

The perfect unity which exists among all the works of His hands, of which we have any definite and accurate knowledge, argues that the power by which they subsist, possesses likewise a perfect and indivisible unity.

All advancement made in utility, in beauty, in the better adaptation of means to ends, of whose origin and cause we really know anything, aside

from mere conjecture, has resulted from the exercise of the personal power, guidance and control of *men*.

The incommensurable nature of times or the periods of time, and the infinite distances between the various planets is incompatible with the idea of the universe being a mere machine, running itself.

There must have been a personal, intelligent agency concerned in its formation, as well as in preserving and upholding it in its manifold operations.

Every man is conscious of an inward conviction that all the wonders, beauty, and adaptation of nature, have their origin in the will and purpose of a superior being.

Moral intuitions, the clear perception between right and wrong, can find no other solution to the problem of their existence, than the direct agency of God and personal influence of the Divine Spirit.



## THE BIBLE FROM GOD.

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In the treatment of this subject, the following inquiries arise, viz:—Has God spoken in an authenticated form to man?

If so, then is there a more *special* revelation than that which is written upon the face of Nature, and in the soul of man?

If these be answered in the affirmative, then it may be further asked, does the *Bible* contain that special form, and as such is it an *inspired* revelation?

These questions open up the way to, and require, a discussion of the whole range of “evidence” respecting the Bible as the Word of God, and upon the *character* of this evidence our proposition laid down must either stand or fall.

Many accept the Bible as the teachings of authority and immemorial traditions.

They have never yet learned to doubt or question its genuineness and authenticity.

They religiously shun all debates, and pass through life happy in the unsuspecting faith of their childhood.

Others less reverent by nature, or more inquisitive it may be, require proofs, and they will be satisfied only with the conclusions of logic.

But we assert that proofs are not wanting, varied, strong, and *convincing* enough for all candid minds, capable of making legitimate deductions from reasoning.

No question within the whole realm of science has so agitated and interested the men of profound thought and critical acumen, as that respecting the claims of Christianity for the Bible.

The result has been, that it has not only stood the test of the most thorough examination, but has passed unscathed through the ordeal of the severest adverse criticism.

Hence it is no assumption now to claim that its authority is fully established.

We have the highest appropriate evidence, amounting to a moral certainty.

It bears internal and irrefutable testimony to its divine authorship.

It is unlike any other book.

It enters upon its mission without extended preface or formal introduction ; but furnishes its own credentials in the character of the themes treated, and truths uttered.

It differs from all other books in its author, subject matter, and object aimed at.

It deals with the unknown, the supernatural, and the infinite.

The divine authority of the Scriptures implies that God has made direct and supernatural revelations to men, and also that these communications from Him are contained in the Bible.

We know that some have gone so far as to deny the *possibility* of such a communication from God to the human mind.

The possibility of a divine revelation is evident from the very nature and power of God.

And its *desirability* is attested by the universal experience of mankind in every age of the world.

Hence we not only infer the probability of, but realize the necessity for, some communication between God and man, over and *above* that contained in nature.

And there is nothing incredible in this, if we admit or even suppose the being of God.

For if we admit the being and existence of God, we must necessarily admit the possibility of a Revelation from Him.

We find that God directs the course of nature and that He controls the destinies of His creatures according to His will, and their constitution.

This being true, we see no reason for believing that He cannot influence whatever He has created so as to receive the communication of His thoughts.

He has created within man a *mind*, with all its various faculties and powers; He watches over its development, and provides for its preservation; and are we to imagine then that He cannot communicate to it His own ideas?

This would be to limit His power in a most important particular, and to place Him on a lower level in relation to man, than man occupies in relation to his fellow-beings.

We can communicate our thoughts to each other, and that by various means ; and are we to suppose therefore that the great God cannot impart *His* thoughts to us ?

Is He unable to add to the thoughts already within our minds, and called forth into exercise by us at the command of our will ?

To say that God cannot do this both makes Him inferior to *human* beings, and also places a limit to His power, where neither a moral nor natural contradiction is involved, or even implied.

We may be told that *His* thoughts are *infinite*, and therefore cannot be imparted to the finite mind. We admit the statement to be true, but deny the conclusion drawn from it, for there is another important analogy to be considered. God has created finite beings in space and time, and these beings possess finite faculties ; and can He not impart finite ideas to beings thus limited ?

On the one hand we see man forming and making known finite conceptions of what is infinite ; then why, on the other hand, may not the infinite Being teach man by adapting His lessons to man's capacity ?

And as God performs acts of power, which are finite in their manifestations and embodiments, why may He not also communicate infinite ideas to finite recipients, since the infinite always involves every degree of the finite ?

It is true that the finite cannot grasp the infinite, except through the medium of some finite representation.

And therefore, the revelation which God might choose to make of Himself, must be put in terms of that which is already known.

Not only was it necessary that a revelation should be given in some *finite* form, but in some *familiar* form.

Not only must it be something which we can grasp in the abstract, but something which we can readily understand in the concrete form.

Philip's difficulty is precisely the same which many have at the present time.

It did not satisfy him to have the existence of a Father in heaven presented as an abstract matter of faith; but he wished it set forth in a concrete form, as a matter of personal knowledge, and hence he said, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."

And to bring an infinite truth within the range of the finite understanding, Christ converts the abstract truth into a concrete form, and illustrates the unknown by the known, when he replies to Philip, saying, "He that hath seen *Me*, hath seen the *Father*."

This example is sufficient to illustrate at least how that God *does* take *some* means of manifesting Himself to us.

But as already indicated, to be wholly adequate, it must to some extent come within the range of our *sense*-perception; and better still, if it come within the range of *sight*, thus proving the truth of the common proverb, that "*seeing* is *believing*."

To make the truth convincing, it must manifest itself to us in some shape or form; and the most appropriate of all that could be selected is that of man, because it is the noblest and most expressive of which we know anything.

Then again, it is not probable that a dead form, such as a statue, picture, or lifeless spectre, would be the one chosen; but it is more reasonable for us to expect that a *living* form would be selected.

The most perfect and satisfactory revelation of a man, is to have him live before you, to see how he bears himself amid the vicissitudes of life, in its trials and temptations, its joys and sorrows.

The special character of the revelation of God, which comes to us through the human life of His Son, Christ Jesus, is a revelation of the mind and heart of God,—a revelation of law and love,—“God manifest in the flesh.”

And He was so full of grace and truth, that those who looked upon Him “beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.”

The human life of Christ was abundantly adequate, as it was likewise the best medium for revealing God to man.

Here, too, we have a revelation of God, which in definiteness and perspicuity, approximates as nearly as possible the revelation which we make of ourselves to each other.

God deals with man through the instrumentality of man, thereby communicating His will to the race. He *thus* chooses to reveal Himself, through

human channels, making use of human language, and human life, to reveal His thoughts and character to man.

And if man is capable of making known his thoughts, character, and will to his fellow-man, then how much *more* probable is it that God can communicate *His* to man—the creature whom He has made.

But again we are told that even if God *can* reveal Himself to man, it is not necessary that He should do so.

As a matter of fact, the true God was known, during the early ages, to a very limited extent.

Even the greatest and wisest of men had but very little, if *any*, right conception of God in His Being and attributes.

Our condition in the absence of revelation would be like that of a man groping in the dark, *feeling* his way, and by the slow process of touch learning what the light might teach him in a twinkling of an eye.

Revelation was the very commencement of human history, the foundation of all later knowledge and improvement.

It was an essential factor in the course of Providence, and therefore must not be regarded as a discord in God's general system.

Nature prompts us to expect some such revelation from the relation which God bears to the human race.

That the universal Father of mankind should be

bound by a parental interest to His offspring, that He should watch over and assist the progress of beings whom He has enriched with the gifts of reason and conscience, is so natural a doctrine, so accordant with His nature and character, that all sects have believed, not only in a general revelation, but also in a special revelation of Himself to every human soul.

When we think of the vast capacities of the human mind, and of God's nearness to it, we are disposed to wonder, not that revelations have been made, but that they have not been even more variously vouchsafed to the wants of mankind.

Revelation presents a striking agreement with the chief method which God has instituted for the carrying forward of individuals and of the race, and is therefore in harmony with His ordinary operations.

Whence is it that we all acquire our chief knowledge?

Certainly it is not from the outward universe, nor yet from the fixed laws of nature; but from intelligent beings more advanced than ourselves.

Nature is a volume which we can read only by the help of an intelligent interpreter.

The great Law under which man is placed, is, that he shall receive illumination and impulse from beings more enlightened than himself.

Now revelation is only an extension of this universal method for the development of mankind.

God thus becomes an immediate teacher, to



communicate higher truths than had heretofore been attained by us.

The feebleness with which unassisted reason apprehended some of the most important subjects of human thought and destiny, calls for a revelation which shall make them plain.

With only nature's lamp to guide, we are like the traveler groping his way at midnight, with a lantern in his hand, now climbing the almost precipitous height, now gliding along the edge of chasms, or sinking in the bog and marsh, until his limbs are weary and his patience worn out, in the difficult task.

We feel the want of the broad light of the noon-day sun, shining in all the strength of its full-orbed splendor over hill and valley, till the whole landscape stands out distinctly to the eye, and the path in which we are to travel is clearly and fully seen before us.

No man who thinks seriously and candidly will decide a revelation from God to be needless and useless, if he considers the state of religion in the heathen world of antiquity, or even in those places where the Bible is unknown at the present.

The greatest of men have often been the most perplexed concerning the problems of human ethics, and people in general are ignorant of, and indifferent to them.

Even granting that some *could* have reasoned out what we call a natural religion, yet there is no assurance that the masses either could or would do so.

There have been those it is true, who, by means of their mental superiority and the aid of reason, could far surpass others in this direction ; but such men have been rare, and even *they* see very indistinctly,—so much so, that when pride does not forbid it, they speak like Socrates of old, making full confession of their ignorance and doubt.

Those who in modern times and in Christian lands have even *ventured* to draw up a system of so-called natural religion, have been aided in their construction by the light of the Bible and by Christian literature.

We challenge the united wisdom of skepticism to collect from any writer, who had no access to the Scriptures, or from all such combined, the details which go to make up natural religion.

It cannot be successfully done without dissembling and cloaking the true meaning of words.

That mere *fragments* of such a system may be found here and there, we admit ; but when all these are brought together and filled as best they may be, what a shattered and mismatched collection we behold !

The temerity of some men, or their dishonesty, perhaps *both*, have led them to assert the contrary, it is true ; and they have been believed by a few who could not test the truth of their statements.

But did any man of genuine candor, and with learning and talents fitted for such a task, ever make the attempt ? Never !

It is still a fact that natural religion, as a system,

can only be found in and built up from the Scriptures.

It has been believed, and not without reason, that the flashes and isolated rays of divine truth, which here and there seem to beam out from the pages of the old philosophy, or from ancient paganism, must ultimately be referred to divine revelation.

We know not what relics of primeval truth were carried away by the nations of old from the plains of Shinar; but it is reasonable to suppose that there were some at least.

Neither do we know to what extent the Jews and the Bible communicated revealed truth to the Gentiles.

Some of the greatest sages of old time visited the East and Palestine itself, and it is hard for us to believe that they learned nothing from the Jews concerning their system of doctrines.

These considerations alone may account for the partial glimpses of great truths found in ancient philosophy and paganism.

But they are only glimpses, and nowhere assume the proportions and purity of the Bible system.

The ancients believed in revelation as a fact, and the same is also true of paganism, everywhere, so far as its system of belief is known.

In Egypt and Assyria, in Greece and Rome, in India and China, this is, or has been the case.

These nations may have been deceived as to individual instances of their faith, but their belief is

none the less important on that account as an argument for the reasonableness of our faith in a revelation.

Its enlightening, purifying and restraining influences were all called for, and were all needed.

Read the popular mythologies of the old world and see what vast magazines they were of wayward fancy and distorted truth, of cruel superstition and grossest error; yet swaying the minds of men by their strange and terrible spell.

They were evidently the fruit of darkness and ignorant fear, or possibly sometimes of ingenious tyrannical fraud.

The fame of Greece, the civilization and learning of Rome, as well as the pride of Egypt, have been disgraced by them.

Take up the writings of the wisest men of antiquity and see how they stumbled on some of those elementary principles of religious knowledge, which pass unquestioned even by the modern skeptic.

And yet if no revelation came from God, no clear and plain declaration of His will to man, how long would these gross errors maintain their hold?

The most odious and horrid vices disgraced the noon-day glory of Roman and Grecian achievement, and were intimately associated oft-times with the celebration of their mysteries and religious rites.

If the light of reason could have sufficed, these things should have been as transient as the mists of the morning.

They should not have waited for the sun of Christianity to rise and dispel them.

But no ; they maintained their ground notwithstanding their progress in art, learning and culture, until this appeared.

With all the wisdom of antiquity, the knowledge of God was not there ; and no man to-day can point to a single tribe or nation that ever renounced idolatry, until it came in contact with at least the reflected light of revelation.

Looking at such facts as those we have enumerated, and examining the character and the claims of our Scriptures, we can no longer doubt that a divine revelation was needed ; and because needed, was given.

Nature and the soul of man are sufficient to lead to a conception of the eternal *power* of God, but they fail to manifest to us the *love* of God.

Nature appears to us as a revelation of law, but the Bible as a revelation of love.

Nature can neither give us a clear and satisfactory view of the moral character of God, nor of the worship with which alone He will be pleased.

That needed revelation which nature fails to give, and which the soul demands, can be found nowhere else but in the Bible.

Here then, are momentous truths, which a man himself cannot discover, but which he gladly receives when they are revealed to him.

It is evident to every clear thinking and unbiassed mind, that the Bible is a revelation from

God, and that it contains all the light necessary from God to man.

There are other works in the world which lay claim to the character of sacred books; but we presume that no one, who has the faintest knowledge of their real character, would for a moment consider the claims of any as being valid except the Bible.

Some defect, such as scientific error, imperfect morality, or absurd legends, stamps all the others as counterfeit.

The Bible, and the Bible only, can justly demand attention as a revelation from God.

It will help us to weigh its evidence, if we know what it is. We can then understand also, what interest its contents excite in the examination of its evidences.

One blunder made by *infidels* is their refusal to read the Scriptures in the light of the times and circumstances of the place and people, when given.

Men say they do not see how God could inspire the Bible and be the author of it, when its several books were written by imperfect, fallible men, who also claim to be their authors.

They find so much of man's method exhibited in them, that they do not see how God's method can be included.

The whole difficulty lies in the nature of the *doing*; for the fact or thing done remains the same.

It is no strange thing therefore, that we should be confounded when we undertake to explain the philosophy of God's methods.

For His thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are His ways our ways.

The main question for us to consider, however, is the question of *fact*.

Here we have before us the written Word.

It is just as patent as the sun which shines in the heavens. And we can no more blot it out of the firmament of the world's thought and life, than we can blot out the sun.

Revision does not affect it any more than an analysis by the solar spectrum effects the sun.

As a system of doctrine, it is just as much an existing fact as the solar system, the planetary system, or the sidereal system.

Does the infidel reject God's revelation of Himself in the sun, because he does not understand the character of the sun?

Does he reject His revelation of Himself in the sidereal and planetary systems, because he does not understand how He has adjusted the sweet influences which bind planet to planet, and star to star? He admits the existence of God in nature.

Does he find no difficulties in understanding how He exists there, how He expresses Himself through nature, how it is permeated with His creative life and energy?

We are not warranted in denying the *existence* of a fact in *any* given instance, simply because we find it attended with mysteries which we cannot explain, or presenting difficulties in the method of its operation which we cannot understand.

The very difficulties and limitation accompanying revelation are adapted to the conditions of moral growth.

A revelation so simple as to require no effort in comprehending its depths of meaning, made so smooth and easy to our feet, as to cost no labor in reaching its lofty heights of vision, would in no sense surpass the work of man ; but it is not *such* a revelation that we would expect from Him who made the mountains as well as plains.

Were there no *Alps* for men to climb, no ocean depths beneath the plummet's reach, no burden of toil and sorrow laid upon our manhood ; if this life were only the play of children, and all its days were bright sunshine, then, indeed, might we expect to find a Bible without difficulties ;—a gospel without parable ;—a kingdom of truth without tasks for the athlete, or rewards for the victor.

If the book which professed to come from an all-wise and infinite God, displayed no difficulties beyond the comprehension of the finite mind, we should at once feel disposed to doubt its claims to inspiration.

If the Bible only embodied human ideas, while avowedly containing the dictates of the Holy Spirit, we should question it.

If it only presented human ideas and exhibitions of love and kindness, while setting forth claims to be the thoughts of the blessed God, we should suspect.

If the Bible is always to be in our world as its



teacher, must it not always contain something for man's instruction in those things not yet understood by him ?

When humanity in its progressive march shall have mastered every difficult problem contained in the Bible, then it shall cease to be the text book of the race.

Too explicit, as well as too obscure a revelation might defeat the very end of God's *purpose* in revelation.

The Bible, both in its origin and contents, is manifestly divine. All in it that is essential as a rule of human life and duty, is made so plain that a child may comprehend it.

All that it teaches us of God's attributes and His personal relation to us in the power and plenitude of His grace, is sufficiently clear to render faith possible, and hence it is the final and supreme expression of God's will and purpose to man.

It becomes to us a visible and tangible sign of God's own hand.

In preparing the Bible for our race, He could have made a book greater in quantity, but for the purpose which it was to serve, He could have given us no better. He therefore presented us with as good a book as we were fitted either to receive or use.

And whatever estimate men may place upon it, or however they may treat it in their own hearts and lives, yet they cannot avoid accepting it as a fact.

A fact, as the word signifies, is something done, an effect produced, or an end accomplished.

The *Bible* is such a fact.

As a book it is the most consummate fact in all this world's history.

And whatever conclusions men may draw respecting its claims, it is here, as it has been in the past, and will continue until time shall be no more.

Hence it well deserves the name it bears as being *the Book*.

It transcends all other books in value, because of the many-sided views of truth which it presents to us; and it only grows more so the longer it exists, and the more carefully it is studied in its relation to the events of the world's history and human experience.

The value of a diamond is always in proportion to the number of angles and sides it contains; for as these are increased it flashes the light from its multiplied faces in every direction.

The main object and *design* of a diamond is to reflect the dazzling splendor transmitted to it from the great source of the world's light.

So, too, the design of the Bible is to reflect, with a *divine* light, from the many-sided views of truth contained within its pages, the image and glory of God.

And "one gem from this ocean is worth *all* the pebbles from earthly streams."

Then as another has so wisely said :

“The sacred page  
With calm *attention* scan. If on thy soul,  
As thou dost read, a ray of *purer* light  
Break in, Oh *check* it not ! give it full *scope* !  
Admitted, it will break the clouds which long  
Have dimmed thy sight, and lead thee, till at last  
Convictions like the sun’s meridian beams  
Illuminate thy mind.”

The Bible was expressly written to reveal God to man, and through the light it imparts to lead man back to God.

It stands before the world as the one great fact, which reveals the character and Fatherhood of God, a revelation, upon every *page* of which we may read in clearest light, the truth that “ God is love.”

There is a sublime eloquence in its language, a purity in its diction, a holy purpose in its themes, and a consistency in all its parts, from beginning to end.

There is a rounded fullness of expression and a completeness of thought throughout, which makes it just as impossible to add to it as to take from it, without detection. It is a book which bears the impress of God upon it.

And as such, it is attested and authenticated by incontrovertible evidence, or tokens, beyond the possibilities of human genius to invent, or reason to produce.

In proof of this statement, we will refer *First* to the evidence contained in

## THE PROPHECIES OF THE BIBLE.

To look into the future and disclose distant events,—those depending upon no ascertained laws and operations of nature, but rather upon seeming incontingencies, or upon the free action of men,—this is the prerogative of God alone.

No other being in the *universe* could do this.

We conclude, therefore, that every prediction, properly so called, is a revelation from God.

The calculations of the mere creature are liable to disappoint us; but the predictions of God never.

The fact of a Divine Revelation being set forth in the form of prophecy, is asserted in various ways, and confirmed by many hundreds of passages from Scripture.

And we cannot think it possible that men so jealous for truth as the sacred writers of the Bible were, would by their combined testimony, have conspired to perpetuate such a gross *fraud* in the name of the God of truth.

We have no reason for supposing that they were either imposed upon or deceived; because they were neither credulous nor superstitious.

Neither were they rash and unwise in their statements, for we find that the very things which they say God revealed unto them have really occurred in the time, place, and manner as predicted by them.

Some of the prophecies respecting our Savior

were fulfilled in a manner so strikingly exact, that we are compelled to believe them.

It may be well perhaps to *quote* a few passages which bear upon this point.

Peter informs us that prophecy came not in old time by the will of man ; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

That what was spoken by God to the prophets was His word to after ages, is evident from the declaration of our Lord, who says to the Jews, "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?"

We lay great stress upon this passage, because it affirms the divine inspiration of Moses.

The same great authority has set his seal to the inspiration of the Old Testament writers as a whole, by declaring that it is *pervaded* with prophecies concerning Himself.

As an *example* of the testimony confirming the inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures, we will quote only this one passage, which declares, "These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me."

It is needless for us to dwell upon the many additional passages where the same doctrine is repeated by our Lord and His disciples, and echoed

by the Evangelists and Apostles in testimony of the reality of the prophetic revelations of the Old Testament.

It is sufficient to state that twenty-five such passages, besides their parallels, occur in the Gospels, an equal number in the book of Acts, and a still larger number in the various Epistles.

Many reasons might be urged for the manner of the predictions contained in the prophecies to which this appeal is publicly made by our Lord and His Apostles.

In a defense of revealed religion written early in the last century, the author expresses himself by saying that "It is highly agreeable to the wisdom of God in governing the world, that these prophecies *should* have such a degree of obscurity attending them, in order that they should not be understood in all their particulars *beforehand*; because that would be an obstruction to many of the *other* great designs of God's providence, and would put Him to the necessity of unusual methods for bringing them about, either by suspending the freedom of man's will, or violently overturning the power of nature to effect them.

For example, suppose God had *particularly* predicted that upon the 25th day of December in such a year of Augustus' empire, at the town of Bethlehem, *Christ* should be born, and see then what would naturally happen in consequence of it.

The Jews would have come in great crowds to welcome this heavenly infant into the world; every

one would have been officious to pay their respects, and to offer presents to Him; they would have carried Him about continually in triumphant chariots, and would have hosanna'd Him from His coming into the world to His going out.

But there would have been one great thing omitted, which our Savior came into the world to teach, that is humility,—which He could not have effectually recommended to mankind, except by the lowliness of His birth and the state of poverty in which He lived.

Therefore, I conclude, that it shows the great wisdom of God in presenting these prophecies just as they are; to show beforehand plain enough the general designs of His providence, and to leave the particulars of them to be manifest only after the event; by His prudently contriving that, till the coming of Christ, God's people might have a sufficient hope and comfortable expectation of Him, and that the rules of nature and the Divine justice might not be unhinged by His coming.

To be obscure is one thing; but to be equivocal is quite another. The Divine prophecies were sometimes obscure, but the pagan predictions were more often equivocal, and were therefore not really predictions at all.

It would have been no revelation if a seer had said, "I say Brutus, Cæsar will conquer," because no one could have decided whether Cæsar should conquer Brutus, or Brutus conquer Cæsar.

Yet such were the character of *many* of the an-

cient oracles, requiring only a crafty arrangement of the words in which they were expressed.

There may be a shadow of obscurity, but there is no equivocation in the prophetic utterance of Isaiah, when he says that "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

So confident were the ancient Jews that this was a Messianic prophecy, that in their Chaldee Targum, or Paraphrase, they introduce the Messiah's name.

But it was not until Christ had truly come and revealed Himself in His true character that this prediction was fully understood.

There are some prophecies which appear to have a two-fold realization, a nearer and a more remote one, in which case the first event becomes as a type and symbol of the other and *higher* one signified. We may refer again to Isaiah for an example of this class of prophecy.

In chapter vii. there is a prediction concerning Immanuel, a part of which has been interpreted as referring to events which occurred very soon after the prophecy was given, and it may have done so; but it has been clearly shown that its full and proper fulfillment could only be in Christ.

This is one of those prophecies which was not immediately fulfilled, nor all at once; but which reached its culmination by a succession of events,



leading up to it through many ages, although its complete fulfillment may be referred to one single age.

There are many prophecies, however, which can hardly be called obscure, and are not properly applicable to different events.

Such are those in which nations and cities pass in procession before the mind of the prophets, who see them on the way to ruin, specify the cause, describe the circumstances, and lament the catastrophe.

The fulfillment of these predictions is clearly manifest.

Jerusalem was destroyed and laid waste by the Romans; the land of Palestine and the surrounding countries are now thinly inhabited, and, in comparison with their former fertility, have been almost converted into deserts; the Jews have been scattered among the nations, and remain to this day a dispersed, and yet a distinct people; Egypt, one of the first and most powerful of nations, has long since ceased to be a kingdom; Nineveh is no more, and Babylon is now a ruin; the Persian empire succeeded the Babylonian, the Grecian succeeded the Persian, and the Roman the Grecian.

The old Roman empire has been divided into several kingdoms. Rome itself became the seat of a government, differing in its nature from any other that ever existed in the world before it; under it the doctrine of the Gospel was transformed into a system of spiritual tyranny and temporal

power; the authority of the pope was held to be supreme in Europe for many ages; the Saracens obtained a sudden and mighty power, overran a great portion of Asia and Europe, and many parts of Christendom suffered much from their incursions; the Arabs maintain their warlike character, and retain possession of their own land; the Africans are a humbled race, and still treated as slaves; colonies have been spread from Europe and Asia, and are enlarging there; the Turkish empire attained great power; it continued to rise for the space of several centuries; but at length paused in its progress, then began to decay, and now evidently stands on the verge of its fall.

These form some of the most prominent and remarkable facts in the history of the world, from the ages of the prophets down to the present time.

And if in the prophecies there is found an index pointing to each and all of them, from first to last, then we may warrantably conclude that they could only have been revealed by the Ruler among the nations, and that they afford more than human testimony to the truth of Revelation.

The historical facts alluded to in the foregoing summary, constitute only a very small portion of those which are predicted in the Scriptures concerning the affairs of nations and cities.

There is therefore, but one reasonable explanation of this unparalleled phenomenon, and it is that the prophets were inspired of God.

Every prophetic message which they received

was a distinct revelation from God, and proves conclusively that there is one who knows the end from the beginning, and who rules over the kingdoms of men.

But what shall we say of that numerous class of predictions which foretell the coming of the Savior into the world?

It has frequently been observed that the Messianic prophecies are the dominant feature of the Old Testament, and many books have been written to prove that they are in themselves a sufficient evidence of the Divine origin of the Gospel.

Some of these, skepticism has labored hard to explain away, and to show that they do not refer to Christ at all; but in regard to others this is impossible, and these, therefore, they interpret as simply Jewish expressions of a national aspiration and wish for a Messiah.

Thus we find some denying their prophetic character altogether.

It is said in confirmation of their theory, that it is an *easy* thing, where there is such a want of particularity, for a lively imagination, among the various events that are constantly occurring, to make an *application* of the prophecy that will exhibit some resemblance.

In like manner the Jews, before the coming of Christ, and even for some time after, explained such prophecies of the Messiah, as for example, Isaiah xi., about which there can now be no possibility of doubt.

As for those who reject *all* Divine revelation, and interpret the Messianic prophecies as the mere utterances of a national aspiration, it becomes their duty to tell us how this aspiration originated, and when, and why it took so definite a shape, and gathered around itself such an extraordinary array of details.

They should explain to us why Bethlehem was fixed upon as the place of the Messiah's birth, and the family of David as his line, and why His humble estate and great glory, His humiliation and exaltation, His sufferings and rejection by His own people at large, His church among the Gentiles, and many other peculiar, and to some extent paradoxical circumstances, came to form part of that national aspiration.

They ought to tell us how it happened that all the details in question came to meet with such exactness, and find embodiment in the life and death, the character and church of Christ.

But they have told us *none* of these things, and never will, because they cannot do it.

Even the brilliant writer, Renan, has not ventured to grapple with these stern facts, and we know of no one else who has done so.

Renan linked together a series of conjectures, the only meaning of which is, that while Jesus corresponded in His advent, life, character and death, to the prophetic descriptions, yet they were not therefore prophecies.

Thus the coincidence is admitted, while the inference is denied.

But it is also true that the coincidence is admitted only in part ; and criticism was never more ignominiously employed than when called into exercise to prove that Christ was not born at Bethlehem at all, but at Nazareth.

About one hundred and forty years ago, Gilbert West, Esq., who was known to be skeptically inclined at the time, set himself to investigate the evidences for the resurrection of Jesus ; and hence the *prophecies* likewise were included in his inquiry.

The result of his research was a sincere conviction of the truth of the Gospel, and a most useful defence of the Christian faith.

Prophecy furnishes us with evidence of the most positive kind in support of Divine revelation.

We are all conscious of an absolute inability to foretell the life, character, and actions of any intelligent and free moral agent.

Neither can we say what will happen to cities and empires, any more than to individuals.

But here we have presented to us a class of men, who, not in one case, nor in twenty, but in hundreds of instances, predicted what persons who were not yet born would be and do, what should be the character, rise, and fall of cities, kings and empires not yet formed ; and various other particulars, equally beyond the unaided intellect of man to perceive.

The only legitimate conclusion to which we can come from all these facts is, that God *Himself* re-

vealed them to men by His *Spirit*, and had them placed upon record for His own glory and our benefit, even as St. John tells us at the close, respecting his gospel, saying, "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through His name."

To those who have the opportunity it may not be unprofitable to compare the great storehouse of scriptural prophecies, with the so-called prophecies elsewhere to be met with.

The prophetic Scriptures have undergone the most searching examination from the earliest times, and the result is that the genuineness of the predictions has been acknowledged by the most eminent and talented of critics.

And indeed, who could but wonder were it otherwise?

Babylon and Nineveh, Egypt and Assyria, Canaan and Edom, Moab and Ammon, Tyre and Sidon, are mentioned by name in these prophecies, and their fall proclaimed long before it happened.

It may be convenient to say that the predictions of their fall were merely utterances of Jewish exclusiveness and hatred of other nations.

But to those who would thus seek to justify unbelief, we say, You are greatly mistaken; for side by side with these predictions, we see many others which promise to the Gentiles the greatest possible temporal and spiritual blessings.

The Messiah promised to Abraham and Israel was with equal clearness promised to the world.

All nations were to be blessed in Him, as we learn from the unfolding of the prophetic announcements.

It would be strange indeed, if national exclusiveness and hatred thus dwelt side by side, with the assurance that Israel should be the channel of light and blessing, of peace and salvation to all the world.

Another objection urged against the prophecies as a proof of the Divine authority of the Bible is, that they were written *after* the events said to have been predicted, had really taken place.

The man who would make such a statement as this, must either be profoundly ignorant or else dishonest in the extreme ; for whoever studies prophetic language, even through the medium of the English translation, will see that the very opposite is the truth ; and that, in fact, the sacred writers continually present prophecy in the form and order of history.

It cannot be supposed for one moment that the Jews would have allowed these prophecies to remain in their Scriptures, and purporting to have been written several centuries before the events occurred to which they refer, if it were possible to avoid it.

The Jews in this case, are our librarians, to whom we go for arguments with which to oppose them.

Aside from the fact that it would be for their interest to *deprive* us of this testimony, these proph-

ecies being found in *their* copies of the Scriptures, furnish us with unquestionable evidence that they were written long before the time of the Savior.

With regard to the assertion that some of the prophecies were not written by the persons whose names they bear, but afterwards, it may suffice now to say that this objection applies chiefly to Isaiah xl. to lxvi., and to the Prophecy of Daniel, which owes its being to the wonderful clearness of its predictions; and the fact that both of these prophecies still hold their place in the Old Testament Scriptures, proves that the objection to them has been most thoroughly and triumphantly refuted.

The evidence for the reality of a Divine revelation as supplied by prophecy, is the same in its nature as that of miracles; because a prophecy is an *intellectual* miracle, and therefore as *much* from God as a miracle performed in *nature*.

The prophecies of Scripture are not the ingenious calculations and guesses of men simply, and which are liable to either hit or miss, but direct communications from heaven which never fail; they must be revelations from God therefore, and they furnish us with a convincing evidence of the Divine authority of the Bible.

THE MIRACLES ARE EVIDENCE THAT THE BIBLE IS OF  
DIVINE AUTHORITY.

That the success of the Christian religion in maintaining its hold upon the hearts and minds of



men, is largely due to a belief in the recorded miracles of Christ and His immediate disciples, must be an admitted fact.

The proof of it is two-fold :

On the one hand, we have the wondrous results which have always attended the earnest preaching of those who, regarding the miracles as the necessary complement of God's manifestation in the flesh, have used them as such.

And on the other hand, we have the utter failure which history records of every attempt, when ignoring the miracles, to secure anything like a cohesive or Christian following.

*Without* the miracles in the category of Christian belief, there would be nothing to show Christ to the seeker after truth as being anything more than a mere man, and hence it would furnish no conditions for permanency or cohesiveness to any institution bearing His name.

Accordingly, we find that our Savior always appealed to the miracles which He wrought, as a proof that He was the true Messiah, and endued with Divine power.

Our Lord is thus seen to be the revealer of the Father, not only in redeeming men from sin, but also in manifesting the Divine control over the universe.

He not only speaks to the hearts and consciences of men, but also discloses to them their true relations to nature.

The miracles therefore become the *insignia* of

His office, and they open up to us the secret power which pervades every part of the external world.

They tell us that the laws by which the universe is governed, and the physical conditions in which we live, spring from a hidden spiritual presence.

The constitution of the world, they say, is the expression of the *beneficence* of God, who has imprinted upon it His own goodness, and designed it to promote the happiness and well-being of His creatures.

The miracles teach us that the outer world is the *visible garment* of Deity, and our frames the temples of His Spirit.

They speak to us therefore of a God that is not afar off, but near at hand.

They assure us that no yawning *chasm* separates Him from His universe, but that His sustaining presence dwells *in* it, that His righteous will *controls* it, and His providence shapes its destiny.

The miracles of our Lord help us to realize more vividly than we otherwise could, the *fullness* of His revelation from God.

Their purpose then is to manifest divine goodness, and in the fulfillment of this purpose, they present to us the visible sign of the Lord's invisible goodness and wisdom.

They bring before the yearning soul the divine helper and healer whom it needs.

Miracles have been viewed by men in almost every conceivable light, and consequently have been treated of in as many various ways.

We therefore find that in most all of the books which have been written on the subject of miracles, the whole discussion is introduced by their author with an attempted definition of a miracle.

Definitions are valuable only when they convey to the mind of the reader a more accurate idea of the thing defined than they possessed before.

But experience proves that they are very seldom adequate to this end, in which case they often become obstacles rather than helps in the investigation of truth.

And for this reason many of the objections which have proved the most difficult to refute, have as a rule been directed against the *definition* more than against the thing defined, and especially has this been true of the objections to miracles.

The very term miracle, indicates in itself, that which is of such a nature as to excite wonder.

An act which may be easily performed by any person, or an event which is repeatedly witnessed by us, conveys to the mind no idea of the miraculous.

No *ordinary* event, therefore, or that which *regularly* occurs, can be called a miracle in the true sense of the term.

For example, to preserve a man in *being* may require the exercise of as great power as to quicken the *dead*; but the one is *regular* and *ordinary*, while the other is *exceptional* and *extraordinary*.

A rare event is always more improbable than one of every day occurrence, and with which we are therefore familiar.

And yet a miracle is something more than a strange and extraordinary thing, or even that which is to us an unaccountable thing.

It is not certain that an event is miraculous simply because it is not in accordance with any known law of nature.

For there may be natural laws of which we at present have no knowledge, and with some one or more of which, the seeming miracle may be in perfect harmony.

But suppose we see some known law of nature supervened, and an event taking place in direct contradiction to it.

In this instance, it is not merely above and beyond nature as we know it, but in direct opposition to what we know of nature's laws.

Such an event, therefore, we may conclude is a proper miracle, and is *known* to be such ; and furthermore, from the very nature of the case it is and must be a work of God.

For it involves a direct intervention of that omnipotent power by which the laws of nature were established, and which alone is able to suspend them in their operation.

In the *Bible* use of the word, a miracle signifies simply an occurrence so *extraordinary* in its character as to produce astonishment in the mind of the spectator.

And so far as anything in the times of the record is concerned, it may be either natural or supernatural.

*Terms* are the creation of Theology and Philosophy, and by means of these, the New Testament word for miracle has frequently been distorted from its New Testament meaning.

A miracle then is defined to be something contrary to, or out of the ordinary course of nature; and from the character of this definition of a miracle thus given, the skeptic comes forward with his cavil, and asks, Is a miracle credible?

Is it *possible* to secure enough testimony to prove *anything* which is really a contradiction of the laws of nature?

Hume, the most famous opposer of miracles, in the Scriptural sense, declares that "a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature;" but he realizes that this is an imperfect definition, for he afterwards says that "a miracle may be accurately defined to be a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposal of some visible agent."

It requires no great degree of mental perception to see that this last definition is not only unsatisfactory, but is rather a formal declaration than a definition.

It is also open to a very *serious* objection, which is applicable to his *former* statement as well, viz:—that the laws of nature are *not* necessarily either violated or transgressed in a miracle.

The *fallacy* contained in the objection urged against miracles, consists in requiring us to prove *more* than is essential to the establishing of the *fact*, and thus goes *beyond* the point at issue.

We are under necessity only of proving the *event*; whether it be the cure of a man born *blind*, a resurrection from the *dead*, or any *other* similar event;—leaving the skeptic of course to explain the event *itself* as best he may, on any other hypothesis than that of its being a genuine miracle.

*Every* divine revelation, prophecy included, is a miracle; but is there any violation of nature's laws accompanying such revelation?

We answer, certainly not; and for the following reasons:

The laws of nature may be *opposed*, or changed into different *channels of operation*, but they cannot be violated; this is *impossible*.

We sometimes use language which *implies* a violation of those laws, it is true; but in such instances, what we speak of as “a law of nature,” is simply an expression based upon our observation of a change in their mode of operation, and which in fact, is merely a perversion of them from their natural course, but not a violation.

We say, for example, that a *drunkard* is violating the laws of nature, when the real *fact* is, that all the time his health is being destroyed by those very laws which, although perverted from their regular course, yet in their changed condition work out a result in exact accord with their nature.

It is true that a miracle is an effect, which, if produced by the secondary forces with which we deal, *would* be conditioned upon a violation of their nature; but according to our definition of a

miracle, it is *not* produced by these secondary causes, but by a power above and independent of them ; hence the law of their operation is not violated.

It may be said that God is not *accustomed* to communicate knowledge to man by direct methods, and that when He does, there is a violation of law.

But as to this assertion, we say simply that it is not *true* ; for the Divine Being is *above all* known laws and is *subject* to *no* law.

And therefore, while He has as a rule, left man to acquire knowledge by ordinary means, yet we cannot say that he violates *any* law by specially communicating to man the knowledge, for example, of future events, such as are contained in the prophecies.

We cannot deny His perfect fore-knowledge ; neither can we deny to Him the absolute freedom of choice and power in giving the knowledge of the *future* to men, when and by whatever means He may will to do so.

And the same is true in regard to visible miracles for like reasons.

The methods which God has instituted for the general conduct and government of the world, are wholly the result of His own sovereign wisdom and righteous will.

If the great Law-giver therefore, should for certain reasons known to Himself, deem it best in any instance to *depart* from His usual mode of opera-

tion in order to accomplish His purposes, it would ill become us to say that He violated or transgressed those laws which he originated, and which from first to last are wholly under his control.

We may say, therefore, that a miracle, in the *proper* sense of the term, is simply the departure of God from His ordinary mode of acting, and signifies an event or effect produced by the special intervention or manifestation of His presence, power and sovereignty.

If we accept the assertion that "a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature," we at once admit what ought not to be predicated of any act of God.

Those who insist upon *such* a definition of a miracle, often infer that a miracle is *impossible*.

Men of scientific minds, whose observation and study have strengthened their confidence in the regularity and uniformity of natural phenomena, *likewise* often deny the possibility of miracles.

For a man who believes in God to do this, is to place himself in a false position ; he is compelled thereby to give up the absolute supremacy of the Creator and ruler of all things.

He who believes in a God, must believe that all things are possible to Him, provided they do not involve a natural or a moral contradiction.

He who believes in a God must also believe in the possibility of a divine revelation,—which is itself a miracle,—and he cannot reasonably deny the abstract possibility of miracles as ordinarily understood.



David Hume did not venture so far as to say that a miracle could not be performed, but contented himself with maintaining that miracles could not be proved, and that no miracle ever *has* been proved.

He says, "we may establish it as a maxim, that no human testimony can have such force as to prove a miracle, and make it a just foundation for any such system of religion."

To the words just quoted he appended a note, however, which is so remarkable that we copy a portion of it for the benefit of our readers, which is as follows: "I beg the limitations here made may be remarked, when I say, that a miracle can never be proved, so as to be the foundation of a system of religion."

For I own, that otherwise, there may possibly be miracles, or violations of the usual course of nature, of such a kind as to admit of proof from human testimony; though perhaps, it will be impossible to find any such in all the records of history.

Thus, suppose all authors, in all languages, agree, that from the first of January, 1600, there was a total darkness over the whole earth for eight days; suppose that the tradition of this extraordinary event, is still strong and lively among the people,—that all travelers who return from foreign countries, bring us accounts of the same tradition, without the least variation or contradiction—'tis evident that our present philosophers, instead of

doubting that fact, ought to receive it as certain, and ought to search for the causes whence it might be derived."

According to Hume, therefore, all miracles are not impossible, and some may be supported by such proof that even philosophers ought to receive them as certain.

His great difficulty however, is in seeing how a miracle can be admitted among the evidences of religion; hence he treats the recorded miracles of Scripture as unfitted either to produce or support faith,—in fact, as no argument whatever for the divinity and truth of religion.

The question of the impossibility of miracles, is therefore, reasonable to atheists, and to them only.

If there be a God who *made* man, then surely He has the power to heal him when sick, without going through any process known to medical art.

There is no impossibility in a man's receiving his sight who was born blind, or in a man's being brought to life again who was consigned to the grave; because the same power which gave sight to the vast majority of mankind by the adoption of *one* mode of operation, can easily supply sight to a mere fraction of the number, who from any cause may be without it, by the selection of any *other* method preferred.

And so too, the same power which formed man from the dust of the ground and placed within him a living soul, can, by a similar volition, bring the

soul *back* again to the tenement of clay from which it has departed.

There is therefore, no impossibility of the miraculous from lack of power ; but the absence of them, if such be true, must be attributed to a want of will.

Hence it follows, that if God has wrought *no* miracle, it is not because He *could* not, but *would* not exercise the power.

But then again, there are those who say that miracles are an *interference* with the order of nature,—whereas the real *fact* is that they are rather an interference with disorder.

For instance, was it not more orderly in the highest sense of the term, and in keeping with the benevolent nature of God as manifested towards His creatures, that a blind man should receive his sight, than that he should *remain* in a state of blindness ?

Reason at once answers, yes ; for the order manifested in nature about us is not the *only* order in the universe to be considered.

But man being constituted with a two-fold nature, there is a spiritual as well as natural order to which he belongs,—and hence the miracle wrought in restoring one to sight, as before referred, was only a restoration of *harmony* between these two orders.

We may say then, that a miracle is not the contravention of natural laws, but the obedience of the natural to the spiritual.

As a rule the spirit, being the highest order, requires that the natural order be regular, uniform and invariable in its operation.

If it were not so, then there could be no true science, nor could there be any guarantee of success accompanying the various enterprises in which free agents might engage.

But even granting that on some special occasion the spiritual order *did* demand a variation from the customary order of nature; yet it is nevertheless true, that in such a case, the variation would not be one of disorder, but simply an obedience of the lower to the highest order.

And as a consequence, in every such instance, the result would be to bring harmony out of discord.

This too, is the precise fact demonstrated by the miracles of the gospels.

Accordingly, the miracles wrought by Christ were *never* arbitrary, but always in obedience to some *higher* law justly claiming the pre-eminence, and to which the lower was thereby made subservient, for the purpose of producing harmony.

But in further reply to those who say, that "a miracle involves an interference with the laws of nature," take for example the case of Lazarus.

When he was restored to life and health by our Lord, and resumed his former place in the family so bereft by his death, we do not understand that the general law of decay was thereby suspended by the miracle.

Other decaying bodies that laid beside his in the tomb continued decomposing just as before ; and even his *own* body, although resuscitated, remained in subjection to the natural law of daily waste.

For us to say therefore, that in his case the laws of nature were *suspended* by the miracle, would not so accurately convey the real truth as to say that he was temporarily lifted above the *reach* of those laws.

An analogy may better help us to understand the true nature of that change which took place in his condition, and how it was was produced.

By chance we discover a *leaf* floating helplessly down with the current of a great river.

If by any means the river should suddenly reverse its course and carry the leaf with it up stream, that would be a violation of its laws, and a reversal of its nature, which has always been to flow downwards.

Or if any *portion* of the river should be reversed, bearing the leaf backwards with its stream, in opposition to the main current still flowing on downwards, the *same* violation of law and reversal of its nature would hold true as *before*.

But now suppose that a bird upon the wing dips down, and lifting the leaf from the current, bears it up the river in its flight and then recommitts it to the stream.

The law of the river has been neither reversed, violated, nor suspended, but has continued on in

its course just as it always has done; but the bird, while following out the natural law of its instinct, has simply lifted the leaf out of and *above* the river's *reach*.

A miracle then, at least in this aspect of it, may be defined as an event produced neither by secondary causes reversed, violated, nor suspended, but by the sovereign will of God, acting outside and independent of secondary causes.

It is true that the laws of nature must be uniform, else they cannot be laws in the proper sense.

If there be any truth in the doctrine of secondary causes as taught us, their laws cannot be reversed or violated.

And our growing conviction of the continuity and solidarity of nature's *forces*, makes the thought of the *suspension* of those laws binding and controlling them, almost as incredible as that of their reversal or violation.

But the question which here confronts us and calling for an answer, is simply this: Are uniformity and all-inclusiveness one and the same thing?

It is true, that as a rule, the laws of nature are, within their sphere, regular and uniform in their mode of operation; but *do* they include and effect *everything* which God desires to accomplish in the world?

God Himself has made this vast machinery which we call the universe, and so well does it perform its appointed work that we may safely conclude it needs no tinkering.

But is it true that God has *limited* Himself to the results secured by this machinery which He has set in motion and preserves in the uniformity of its operation?

There are two serious *difficulties* in the way of such a limitation.

One is, that the unvarying process observed in all the works of nature is at once assigned to an *impersonal law*.

This eliminates God from nature *altogether*, so that we cannot with propriety, in view of such divorcement, speak of *limiting* Him to working through those laws in which He is not essentially *present*.

The line of reasoning is thus broken, for there can be *no* comparison drawn between God and those laws in and with which He has nothing to do; and hence it is difficult, if not *impossible* indeed, to deduce a convincing argument for God's *personality* from the impersonal laws of nature.

And such is the objection of infidelity.

But granting that God is the author of *all* laws, which as we believe has been clearly shown; and that while thus performing His will within their sphere, though not doing *everything* which He may wish to accomplish; yet if He is more than the essence and sum total of all nature's laws through which He evidently works, if He really transcends them, how can He best manifest it except by performing some works outside of them, such as miracles for example?

We say *some* such work,—not much it may be, and only as the occasion of His purpose may demand ; for working miracles constantly would tend to destroy our belief in law, which makes a miracle all the more impressive, and it would also lead us to discredit nature's being a perfect contrivance, but one which requires constant supplementing.

But the *other* difficulty referred to, in respect to the limitation of God, is, that even to those who accept the unvarying force of natural law as requiring a designer and maker, such force can clearly reveal only the inexorableness of God.

Love as an attribute of God is but dimly shown in nature, without the reflected light of revelation upon it, as the history of all natural religion plainly proves to us.

God is good to man in nature, but he fails to realize and understand it from what nature teaches. How therefore shall He *prove* His love to man?

A parent whose habitual and unvarying acts of kindness are not appreciated or understood, naturally tries some other method, manifesting the tenderness of his love by acts out of his usual course of conduct.

What then is more natural to suppose than that our Father in heaven should pursue a similar course with His children?

To us, Jesus Christ is the great and extra-natural expression of His love ; and in His miracles we see what is God's purpose and favorite exercise



of power, and we are enabled to read through all ages the message so clearly written that God is not a Being with whom we only have mechanical relations, but the most personal, intimate, and loving relations as well.

It is a very common remark, that miracles cannot be believed because they are contrary to our experience.

The most natural and ready answer to this is, that miracles not having occurred within the time of our own experience is no proof of their being contrary to all experience.

They differ in character from those occurrences of our own time and experience it is true, and so do numberless other events which we readily believe, although we find no parallel between them and anything we have ever witnessed in the past, or ever shall witness in the future it may be.

Miracles are not a matter of every-day experience then, and this is precisely the ground which the believer takes.

It is this very fact which *constitutes* them miracles; for as we have already suggested, if they were a thing of general observation, then they would come to be viewed as natural events.

The moment men began to suppose them referable to some exceptional or occasional law, they would at once cease to have any such claim as we now urge in their favor.

*Again*, when we are told that miracles are contrary to experience, or as we should say, have never

occurred within the experience either of ourselves or others of our own time, we simply reply that this fact by no means disproves the reality of miracles.

We know only a small part of the sum of human experience, and even that is to a great extent the result of testimony.

It is the height of presumption therefore, for any one to affirm that miracles are contrary to experience.

When a child brought up in the tropics is first told of the beautiful crystals of snow which fall from the heavens in northern climes, it is quite reasonable that he should be skeptical about it.

But when the difference of the conditions is explained, the original improbability is not only removed, but the way is prepared for seeing that it may be, yea that it *must* be true.

And in the same manner when we hear of miracles occurring as mere prodigies, without any reason for accepting them, it should not be wondered at if we were extremely skeptical.

But on the other hand if it can be shown that at any time in the world's history there was an *occasion* for them, and a reason to *expect* them, then the way is prepared, to say the least, for considering whether the statements of those who affirm the very miracles which reason would lead us to expect at such a time, may not be true.

If this should prove insufficient, then we would urge, with Archbishop Whately, this fact; that

“when men say miracles are contrary to experience, they only mean *some* experience,” but in opposition to this partial denial we have the recorded testimony of a great many credible witnesses that miracles did occur in the time of their experience.

Why should not the positive testimony of these witnesses be as valid as that of those who only say *they* never saw a miracle?

We may assert once for all, and as an incontrovertible fact, that those who say miracles are contrary to (all) experience, only assume the very thing to be proved.

Whether miracles find a place in universal experience or not, that is to say, in the whole past experience of the human race, can only be ascertained by testimony.

And we take the ground that the testimony of those who have left their record concerning the *fact* of the Bible miracles, is of such a character as to command *belief*.

We freely admit that a miracle is an improbable thing in itself; if it were not so then it would not be a miracle at all.

But that which is improbable in itself may lose very much or all of its improbability by reason of its attendant circumstances.

The improbability of miracles is often dealt with as if it were a constant quantity.

By many, the miracles of the gospel are cast into one common heap with all sorts of mediæval rubbish, and then they are all set aside as being

alike improbable and unworthy of consideration.

The so-called miracles performed by the juggler in ancient and modern times, were generally performed for the purpose of startling the community, to gain power, influence and wealth.

Christ wrought his miracles for the good of mankind and not Himself; and while the former aimed only at exciting the curiosity, He strove to impress the heart.

For men therefore to cast the gospel miracles into one common heap with the mere tricks of leg-erdemain, is neither reasonable nor honest.

The only honorable and reasonable course to pursue is fairly to estimate the probability or improbability attaching to the gospel miracles in themselves, and then deal with the subject according to its merit or demerit, as the case may.

We have already said that what is improbable in itself may lose much or all of its improbability by reason of the attending circumstances.

That which appears violently improbable from a limited view of the case, may become quite probable upon a wider acquaintance with the facts.

A miracle may be contrary to *our* experience, but are we to reject it on that account *alone*?

If so, then the Eastern monarch was acting in harmony with the soundest reason and logic, when he refused to believe that water could be converted into a solid, cut into pieces, and carried in his pocket.

The phenomenon produced by changing water into *ice* was contrary to his experience, and hence as improbable to him as that of a burning mountain throwing out torrents of *lava*, is contrary to the experience of others.

But neither are improbable when we understand the conditions producing the result.

We maintain then, that not only do the circumstances connected with the gospel miracles reduce the improbability of their occurrence, but they actually turn the scale in their favor.

If we once admit it to be highly probable that God should give a revelation to man in addition to that which nature affords, that it is probable such a revelation should be given through the medium of human life, and that it was surely expected that any one sent on such a mission to the race should exhibit as credentials of his mission, super-human excellence of character, wisdom and power, is it unreasonable to suppose that such a one should do things which no one else could do?

On the contrary would it not be more unreasonable to suppose that he should not do such things?

It would only be in keeping with what we should certainly *expect* from one who claimed to come from, or in the name of God, and in connection with his mission also to find him doing as well as saying many extraordinary things.

Christ's miracles, yea all the Bible miracles, were a divine necessity.

Ancient sages, as well as Christian scientists,

have always felt and acknowledged the miraculous exercise of Divine power to be a necessary truth.

It is a divine power co-operating with, and yet superadded to the forces implanted in material objects, without whose intervention it is impossible to explain the external support and the internal working of the material objects in the universe.

The records of the Old and New Testaments attest that no miracle was ever wrought by any human being, except to prove his mission in revealing to the world the divine provision for human redemption.

No man had exhibited miraculous power for 2300 years previous to Moses ; then he *alone* possessed and exercised it, simply to attest his divine authority and commission, when opposed by Aaron and Miriam in the desert of Egypt.

But after this we find that one after another down the long line of God's servants who were sent by Him with special divine communications to men, were endued with this same power as the evidence of their divine authority.

It was therefore in the sincere conviction produced by all this light of Old Testament history, that the distinguished and learned Jewish senator said to Jesus on His coming into the world, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him."

And when 600 years later the Jews were abandoned because of their unbelief, and the nominal

Christian church became as corrupt as it is possible to conceive,—when at this juncture Mahomet sought to procure the acceptance of his professed revelation from God, and his first hearers naturally demanded miracles from him, so universally expected as the sign of divine authority, he could only urge in reply, that God had already given two revelations attested by miracles, and that neither the Jews nor Christians were influenced by them, and that he had therefore empowered him as His last prophet to *force* the acceptance of His worship by means of the sword.

Human reason still argues as it did in the days of Moses, of Jesus, and of Mahomet, saying, that if the Divine Being gives to any man miraculous power over material things, then He must have empowered man with authority to reveal *that* truth which human reason could not otherwise attain.

And so we conclude that the miracles were the representative effects and manifestations of the power of *God*, which Moses, Christ and His Apostles were putting forth ; and the *end* to be secured through them, man's salvation, the greatest and most sublime miracle of all.

Christ's miracles were the divine authentication of His mission upon earth, because they were the visible exhibitions of that supernatural power, which coming continually into the realm of nature, produces all the effects that are manifest in nature.

They were authentications also of the *character* and *purpose* of His mission ; because being per-

formed by Him in interest of, and for the benefit of mankind, they testified of a divine love that was able and willing to save even to the uttermost.

And hence our Savior appealed to them as *proofs* of His claim to be the true *Messiah*, and endowed with divine power ; saying, " Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me ; or else believe me for the very works' sake."

We find also that the Apostles continually referred to the miracles which had been wrought by Christ as an evidence of His divine mission.

Obviously, the great aim and purpose of miracles was, as we have already indicated, to attest the divine mission of those who performed them, and the divine authority of the revelations which they were commissioned to deliver.

In addition to this they were designed to establish *faith*, not only in those who heard the inspired writers, but also in all those who should become acquainted with their words and works in after ages.

To accomplish these purposes what could be more appropriate than the working of miracles ?

When once the attention is gained and the respect commanded by means of a miracle, then the truth is given ; and the truth, *with* its attesting *miracle*, remains our possession.

As we study and live the truth, we acknowledge increasingly the authority of simple truthfulness, and gain the position which Christ desires for us, —believing in *Him* rather than in His works—ac-



*cepting* Him rather for His character than His miracles.

Let a man once ignore the miracles of Christ, and then let him find himself drawn toward some other view than that found in the teaching of Christ, as many are, and then see how surely will the thought be entertained that perhaps Christ was mistaken in that instance; and as a result, how strong too will be the tendency to reduce Christ practically to a place among other teachers.

If any one doubts this, let him study the history of the sects and of authors who have given up the miracles.

Let us suppose that after Jesus had announced Himself as the Christ, a poor leper had come running up to Him with the request, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean;" and instead of replying, "I will, be thou clean," He had said, "I can do nothing for you," would it not have discredited His mission?

And yet modern infidelity discredits Him because He is reported to have done the very thing which would have discredited His mission had He failed to do.

It is evidently true, that for the miracles recorded in the Gospels and in the whole Bible, reason demands a fair hearing.

And this is all that *we* ask for them.

The miracles of the New Testament were not done in a corner.

There was no effort made to conceal them.

Nay, rather they challenged scrutiny.

And they were of such a nature, and performed under such circumstances that the witnesses could not be mistaken as to their genuineness.

Attempts have been made to show how the reports may have been due to mistake or the result of a delusion; but as the great German infidel Strauss has conclusively shown, they have all most signally failed.

A critical examination of them clearly proves that instead of their being excrescences which have been *added* to the original history, they form an essential part of it.

If the *miracles* only were spurious and these discourses attending them *genuine*, then the difference between the two would at once have been apparent, and would therefore have never been permitted to be joined together as truth in history.

It is only by refusing to *examine* the gospel miracles that the contrast fails to be seen between them and the so-called miracles of childish petulance in the gospel of infancy, such for example as winking Madonnas of the middle ages, table-turnings and spiritual rappings in more modern times.

*Renan* tries to make something of the fact that these wonders were wrought in an uncritical age, when belief in the supernatural was rife, and scientific men were not present to test them.

If the miracles had been of such a character as to require us to procure the opinions of savants and philosophers before we could accept their reality, then indeed might there be some force in

the objection ; but we find the case to be very different with regard to Christ's miracles.

The genuineness of miracles cannot be proved by all kinds of evidence ; but like other existing facts, requires the particular kind of evidence which is proper to them.

When our Lord gave sight to the man who was born blind, he had a kind of evidence for the miracle performed which no other man could possibly have.

The evidence of his parents and friends, and all who knew him before and after, was of a different character it is true, but none the less real and convincing for that reason.

The attempt to persuade either the subject or the witnesses of the miracle that it could not be *proved* to be such, would have been utterly *futile*, in the presence of the practical demonstration.

Those who only saw the man after the miracle was wrought, were dependent upon this testimony and that of others ; yet they would hardly reject it as not being a miracle, on the ground that it could not be proved to be one.

Those who neither saw the man nor the actual eye-witnesses, would only have the same kind of evidence for the reality of the miracle as would be available for any other historical event.

In general, the evidence for a miracle, as a fact, is exactly the same in its relative character as that which is adduced in proof of any other fact.

The only question then really seems to be,

whether the miraculous character of a fact can be proved.

In the case of the blind man referred to, there seems to be every conceivable reason for believing in the reality of the miracle.

The youth, whose parents know that he was *born* blind, whom every one in the community *believed* to be blind, and who knew *himself* to be blind, did not require an investigation of scientists or consultation of physicians to determine whether he had been blind or now saw.

The personal experience set forth in his testimony that "whereas I was blind and now see," was sufficient of itself.

When death enters our dwellings and claims as his victim those whom we love, the evidences of his fatal work are so self-evident as to admit of no doubt whatever, when we look upon the cold brow, the pallid cheek, and the pulseless form.

But to leave infidelity without the least shadow of an excuse for caviling, we are told that when Jesus was crucified, and every one believed Him to be dead, a soldier pierced His side with a spear.

Being in the hands of His enemies is a sufficient proof of the reality of His death and burial.

And as His enemies would not too readily believe in His death, so neither would His friends now too hastily believe in His return to life again.

But on visiting His tomb three days later, they find the stone rolled away, and only the grave-clothes carefully folded occupy the place where they had laid Him.

When therefore, immediately following this discovery, He appeared to them in bodily form, and showed them His hands and His side, it was to them the most credible evidence that He was no longer dead, but was risen again, even as He had said unto them.

Now, if this story of His resurrection was untrue, and He was still in the hands of His enemies, they could easily have proved the report a delusion by simply producing the body.

Then confusion and swift destruction would have overtaken the theory of His disciples, and Christianity also would have received a fatal blow.

On the other hand, if the disciples had the body in their possession, it would be utterly impossible for them to believe in his resurrection ; and so all their most enthusiastic dreams would at once have vanished.

But neither of these hypotheses were true ; for He had appeared first unto the women, then to the two disciples in the way, then to the other disciples left at Jerusalem, then on another occasion when all were together, then to over five hundred witnesses, and last of all to Paul.

And that deception was practiced upon the witnesses under all these circumstances is neither probable nor possible.

Nor is it conceivable how that in all this the Apostles were only acting out a deception upon the people themselves.

This would only have proved a miracle more astounding than any which they declare.

Being so slow to believe in His resurrection themselves without a positive proof of it, they would naturally have no inclination to practice deception ; and even granting that they had the disposition, yet the circumstances were such that it would have been impossible to do so.

But we are told that even if miracles could be proved, they would add nothing to the value or truth of the Bible.

Here then, first of all, it may be well to hear what the Scriptures themselves say on this subject.

When the Egyptian sorcerers were convinced of the reality of Moses' miracles, they exclaim, " This is the finger of God."

The miracles of Moses therefore proved to them the immediate presence and power of God, and that He was on the side of Israel's leader.

When the prophets of Baal contended with Elijah, the miracle which was wrought through him produced such an impression that "when all the people saw it they fell on their faces ; and they said, The Lord He is God."

It is recorded over and over in the gospels that the effect of the miracles of Christ was to persuade many of His divine mission and Messiahship.

This is true of Nicodemus, and of others.

Our Lord appealed to His miracles as bearing witness of Him.

The Apostles following in His steps make a like use of the miracles wrought both by Christ and themselves.

In the face of such facts we cannot admit that miracles are of no value and prove nothing, for we can at once see their purpose and say what they prove.

The reference is to miracles as "external signs," by which our faith in Christ is supported and our hope in the gospel is confirmed.

They furnish a kind of proof for the truth of Bible doctrine, which is readily comprehended and universally appreciated.

They are the visible sign of the invisible grace, which both Prophets and Apostles received.

They are not the truth itself, but being true in themselves they bear witness of the truth and produce conviction.

They challenge contradiction, and thus standing before us as an undeniable fact, proclaim that the worker of miracles must be a messenger sent from God.

In the case of our Lord they are of transcendent importance; for if we take away the miracle of His incarnation, of His resurrection, and of His ascension, nothing of value remains.

Hence Paul says, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."

Miracles then are links in that great chain of evidence by which Jesus was proved to be the Savior of the world.

As such they are of immense value.

In the preaching of the gospel the miracles are of unspeakable advantage, from the fact that they form an essential part of its doctrine.

They place Christ before us in a position unoccupied by any other ; and men felt as they gazed upon His mighty deeds that He was indeed the Messiah.

They illustrate to us also the beneficent design of the gospel, in that by means of these, pre-eminently their author went about doing good.

The miracles of Christ were the natural outflow of the Divine fullness of grace and power which dwelt in Him.

*God* was thus seen to dwell in Him, and His human nature to be endowed with the Holy Ghost without measure.

It was most reasonable to expect when such a being was in the world that these mighty works should manifest themselves in Him.

He was Himself the great miracle of which His own works were but merely the sparks or emanations.

His miracles entered with Him ; and thus was introduced a new element into the order of nature, not to disturb but to restore its harmony—to enrich and ennoble it.

Therefore all his miracles bore the stamp of His character.

They were not mere exhibitions of power, but also of wisdom, holiness and love.

In the case of the Apostles, miracles were for a sign to those who believed not, more than to those who believed ; and so they will continue in their purpose until all the world is brought to a knowledge of Christ.



It seems to be an established fact that miracles were generally designed for the purpose of proving the Divine commission of those by whom they were wrought.

They are in all cases, to say the least, proofs of the special favor and Providence of God.

Those of Moses, the Prophets, the Apostles and Christ, were signs and tokens of a Divine legation, and as such, supply a powerful evidence to the truth of their doctrine ; because we cannot imagine that the God of truth would work miracles in support of teachers of falsehood.

It may indeed be admitted that they do not of themselves prove a doctrine divine, but they so combine with other testimony to that end as to make the conclusion all the more convincing.

Every miracle is in reality a revelation of God's power and supreme control over nature, and as such, teaches great and important truth.

But we are told that all religions profess to be supported by miracles.

This may be true ; but to urge such claims as an objection to the truth of *all* miracles would be unreasonable.

There is such a thing as evidence ; and if it can be shown that we have satisfactory evidence for the miracles of the Bible, and for no others, then it follows that the falsity of the latter is no argument against the validity of the former.

When we compare other alleged miracles with those of Scripture, we perceive a great difference

between them in most cases, and that in their essential character.

Some miracles, so-called, are puerile and absurd, such as no sane man can or would attempt to defend.

But whether deemed puerile or not, it is a fact that the scriptural miracles rest upon genuine historical evidence, and in this respect they differ from the miracles alleged to have been wrought in support of any other religion than that which has been received from God.

The miracles asserted in favor of ancient systems of paganism have utterly failed to preserve those systems from extinction.

The miracles of Buddhism and Brahminism are mere assumptions and wholly void of any proof whatever.

But the very fact that false religions have appealed to miracles in justification of their claims, shows that there is implanted within man a natural instinct which calls for extraordinary proof or an attestation of Divine authority.

We can hardly conceive of such a desire being created within us without a purpose upon the part of its author to satisfy that desire.

When the Jews demanded from our Lord, saying, "What sign showest thou, that we may see and believe thee? What dost thou work?" they uttered the voice of our common humanity.

This same human desire, whether voiced in

words or not, is responded to by the general assumption of miracles in false religions.

Sometimes we hear it affirmed that in fact one miracle is as good as another, and that if we believe one we must believe all, including the alleged miracles of Brahminism, Buddhism, Roman Catholicism, Mormons and all.

No declaration could be more fallacious than this.

Miracles are facts that appeal to the senses, and as such must be supported by evidence internal and external.

Very often the mere aspect of a miracle, and the circumstances under which it is said to have happened, are sufficient to refute it.

Some alleged miracles are of such a character as to create the suspicion of fraud at a first glance, and these we at once *reject* in the absence of testimony.

Others are without *proper*, independent and genuine evidence, and are likewise discredited; while others again are probably fictitious and ridiculous, and for that reason are discarded.

Thus in one way or another, we repudiate the great majority of miracles so-called, on record, without hesitation.

We investigate the claims of those which remain, and this leads to a still further reduction.

The increase of knowledge and science has removed the cloak of mystery from many of these alleged miracles; but some remain after all reduc-

tions, in the presence of which science is compelled to bow down with humble and adoring reverence.

After a critical review of all the signs and wonders which the history of the world has left upon record, we can only hold fast with confidence to those recorded in Scripture.

The great standing miracle of the Romish Church is undoubtedly that of trans-substantiation, in which it is claimed that the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood, the soul and divinity of Christ.

This is not only a miracle which cannot be tested by the senses, but on the contrary is contradicted by them.

Where is there a miracle upon record in Scripture of which so much can be said ?

And yet it is asserted that we must believe this Romish miracle on the faith of Scripture ; but we find that Scripture, honestly interpreted, lends no support to anything of the kind.

Then again we are still further asked to admit the reality of the miracle on the ground that all things are possible with God.

In reply to this we say that it is impossible for God to lie, or to deny Himself ; and if He tells us by means of our natural faculties that the bread and wine after consecration are the same as before, we must believe it to be so, because God cannot deny Himself through the only faculties given us for the purpose of receiving and testing evidence as to any existing fact.

A comparison of other *asserted* miracles to which we have already referred, namely, the winking Madonnas, and the many to be found in the legends of the saints, shows that there is a great difference between miracles so-called, and that one is not as good as another.

As a rule, we have very little difficulty in deciding which are mere imitations, impositions and delusions, and which are trustworthy.

Closely allied with the claim that all miracles are of equal value, is the groundless assertion that the miracles which Christians reject are as well authenticated as those which they receive.

A most gratuitous statement is this; and yet often expressed in various forms.

In 1680, the English deist, Charles Blount, published a partial translation of an ancient fiction called "The Life of Apollonius of Tyana," to which he added notes.

The object of his work was to bring discredit upon religion, and especially upon the miracles of Christ.

This Apollonius is represented to have lived during the Apostolic age, and to have been a great philosopher, traveler and miracle-worker.

The so-called "Life" was written by Philostratus about 200 A. D., for the amusement of Julia, the wife of Septimus Severus, the Roman emperor, and one hundred years or more after the death of Apollonius.

Another century later, Hierocles of Bithynia, a

persecutor of Christians under Diocletian, ventured to compare the miracles ascribed to Apollonius with those of Christ.

Eusebius, of Cesarea, Lactantius, and others, refuted Hierocles.

But let us look at these two cases for a moment and see how they compare as to their credibility.

According to history, the New Testament closes at the same time as the story of Apollonius; but while Apollonius is not once named by any writer until a century or more after his death, the facts of the New Testament during the same period were published in the greater part of the then known world.

The New Testament is a record written by contemporaries; but the story of Apollonius was first written by a man who lived a century later, and who is the only real witness for the existence of his hero.

We may therefore safely conclude that the miracles of Apollonius are not only without any evidence whatever, but that in all probability no such man ever existed.

Mr. Hume seems to have been ashamed of the affair, for in his own attack upon the miracles of the Bible he never once mentions either Apollonius, Philostratus, or Hierocles; and yet he ventures upon a reference almost equally ridiculous, namely, to one *Alexander* of Pontus, who figures in a satirical writing by Lucian, of Samosata, as a worker of miracles in Paphlagonia and elsewhere.

We will not question the *existence* of this Alexander, but at the same time must express our surprise that a man of Hume's talent did not deem it beneath his dignity and the gravity of the subject under consideration, to so much as mention his name.

Even granting that Lucian's account be true, yet this man was nothing more than a clever impostor, whose pretensions are refuted in the very history which records them.

Another example referred to by Mr. Hume is that of Vespasian, to which we refer, because it is frequently cited in this controversy.

One of the best attested miracles in all profane history (says the writer last named), is that which Tacitus reports of Vespasian, who cured a blind man in Alexandria by means of spittle, and a lame man by the mere touch of his foot, in obedience to a vision of the god Serapis, who had enjoined them to have recourse to the emperor for these miraculous and extraordinary cures.

He also adds that "Suetonius gives the same account," but he does not tell us that Vespasian consulted the physicians who reported the curability of the cases; neither does he tell us that while Tacitus expressly says it was the lame man's *hand* which was affected, Suetonius twice over says it was his *leg*.

Nevertheless we would urge as well as admit that these are among "the best attested miracles in all profane history."

But no one can fail to observe two things ; *first*, that these so-called miracles may have been contrived to enhance the credit of the god Serapis, who has since fallen in spite of them ; and *second*, that they very much resemble in character, and therefore may have been imitations of some of the miracles of Christ, which by that time had been published in all Egypt.

It is needless to say anything more of what even Mr. Hume calls, " so gross and so palpable a falsehood."

The prodigies reported by Livy and other ancient authors are sometimes referred to as standing on the same level with those of Scripture, but very unjustly so ; because no candid person can believe or defend the one, while myriads believe and defend the other, notwithstanding the fact that some writers have attempted to liken the Hebrew historical records to the mysterious traditions of pagan nations.

The Jewish miracles are connected with national and monumental evidences reaching down to the present day, while there is no credible evidence whatever to be found in support of the pagan miracles.

The miracles of Romanism have already been spoken of ; but none of these have been urged to any extent in this controversy.

Before answering the remaining objections, let us observe that the early opponents of the gospel never denied the miracles of Christ and the Apostles.



The Jews did not deny them ; but asserted that they were effected by Satanic power, or by virtue of the Holy name of which Jesus had obtained possession,—the *Shem Hamphorash*, a supposed secret name of the *Most High*, the knowledge of which was attended by miraculous powers.

The pagans did not deny them ; they rather sought to show by such examples as those of Aristeas, Alexander, and Apollonius, that they were the result of magic.

The only lesson which we wish to draw from these facts is, that the miracles of the New Testament in general, were attested by such an array of convincing evidence, that there was no excuse left for disbelieving in their reality.

If any did remain in doubt they were like unto those of whom our Lord said, “ If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.”

Among the objections raised against the miracles of Holy Scripture in later day is this ;—that they were mere appearances, ocular delusions, or other deceptions of the senses.

This we have answered in part before.

The ground taken by those who speak thus is, that the senses are often imposed upon or deceived, and therefore incapable of infallible testimony.

It may even be granted that under certain conditions this is sometimes true ; but when it is, the errors of one sense may easily be corrected by another, by reason, or by the senses of other men.

For example, a coin placed in a vessel of pure water, under certain conditions, seems to the eye to occupy a position which in reality it does not.

But by the aid of other tests applied, the erroneous impression may be easily accounted for, and rectified at once.

*Again*; a person may look at two similar pictures in a stereoscope, and yet see only one; but calling to our aid the laws governing light and reflection, it is easy to explain this phenomenon and ascertain the truth.

In like manner other senses may convey an erroneous impression; but the real facts may be known either by some change of circumstances or by the testimony of those whose senses are not disordered.

It would be impossible for any great number of persons to look upon a house at the same time, and think it a tree.

It is true that we might find a thousand persons who looking upon a consecrated *wafer* pronounce it to be the body of Christ, although their senses testify to the contrary; but this is not a parallel case.

For the senses, fulfilling their purpose, give evidence truly; but the supposed fact is asserted to be wholly beyond their jurisdiction.

It may be laid down as an axiom, that in a state of perfect consciousness, with the organs in a normal condition, the mind sane, and no apparent reason for suspecting them to be imposed upon, we

may safely rely upon the evidence of our senses.

But without further preface, let us look at some of the miracles of Scriptures, beginning with that of the Israelites passing through the Red Sea.

Suppose any person should assert that yesterday he divided Lake Erie in presence of all the people of Cleveland, and with the waters standing like solid walls on either side of them, he had led the whole city, men, women, and children, over to the other side on dry land, when immediately after, the waters flowed together as before.

Now if untrue, it would be a moral *impossibility* to persuade the people of Cleveland of its verity; for every man, woman, and child could contradict the statement, and say that this was a notorious falsehood; for they had *not* seen the lake thus divided, neither had they gone *over* it on dry land.

It is also impossible to conceive of a sane man presuming upon such a statement as this, with an array of witnesses whose senses bore testimony to the contrary; and the same is true in respect to the Bible miracle referred to.

If we admit the historical truth of the record upon the same ground that we accept any other authenticated truths of history, the miracles which preceded the exodus, and that of the passage through the Red Sea, could not have been ocular delusions.

We have the testimony of those whose eyes *beheld* the parted waters, and whose feet *carried* them *through* its depths upon the dry ground, and whose

hearts rejoiced in their great *deliverance* as they beheld their enemies submerged beneath the closing waters, and to which frequent reference is made by them in after years, but never once doubted or denied by them.

And those miracles of the New Testament seem as equally real, clear and authentic.

The sick, blind, deaf, lame and leprous, who so graciously shared in the benefit conferred by them were certainly in a position to *know* of their reality, and so had their friends and acquaintances who knew them before and after, the best of reasons for *believing* that what they saw was a fact.

Why then are we asked to believe that when upon their own testimony they knew themselves to be well, able to see, and hear, and walk and talk, and acted accordingly, it was all a mere delusion?

And upon what ground are we asked to believe that all who saw them, and held the same opinion, yea having an abiding *proof* of the facts in their experiences and associations with them, were also deceived?

The demand which is thus made upon our credulity by those who oppose miracles is simply preposterous.

Did not the thousands who feasted on a few loaves and fishes in the wilderness know certainly whether they had been fed and were satisfied?

Did not the widow of *Nain* know that her son had been dead and was restored to life again?

And so we might ask the same question of Peter

walking on the water, of Lazarus raised from the dead after three days in the grave, or the centurion's child healed by a word from the Savior at a distance, of the lame man cured at the pool of Bethesda, of him who was restored by the Apostles at the beautiful gate of the temple, of Elymas made blind for a time at Lystra, of Publius and many others whose diseases were removed at Melita.

We do not recall a single miracle of such a character, and wrought under such circumstances as to leave room for any possibility of ocular delusion.

The miracles supposed to have been wrought by the Egyptian magicians, by Simon the sorcerer, and by Elymas and others, have been adduced as affording a presumption that miracles may be false when they seem to be real.

As to all these mysterious exploits of legerdemain by the parties referred to above, it is enough to say that while they are mentioned, yet the Scriptures never recognize them as miracles.

When, for example, Moses wrought a miracle, it is said that the magicians "did (likewise or) in like manner with their *enchantments*."

This only proves however, that a miracle may sometimes be imitated by sleight-of-hand, jugglery, and optical delusions; but the occurrence of counterfeits has never been denied.

We only claim that in the miracles wrought by the Prophets, Christ and His Apostles, there is no evidence of imposition or a probability of it.

Our idea of a miracle is, that it is a Divine interposition either mediate or immediate, and that consequently real miracles cannot be performed by means of enchantments or confounded with them.

However plausibly it may be said that this or that Scripture miracle may have been counterfeited, yet it cannot be insinuated that any one of the Prophets or Apostles was either a magician or a sorcerer.

The death of the first-born in Egypt, as foretold by Moses, was surely no act of sorcery.

Peter Annett, an infidel of the last century (1761) audaciously asserted that the case above referred to, as recorded in Exodus 11 : 5 and 12 : 29, was a wholesale assassination, in execution of a preconcerted plan ;—just as if assassins could distinguish by night the first-born of man and beast from all others, or could have executed their purpose in one night, even had they been able to distinguish.

The tricks of Simon at Samaria, are expressly said to have been sorceries, or mere feats of legerdemain, and we are not sure that they produced any effect upon the minds of the beholders, for the word translated “ bewitched ” (Acts 8 : 9, 11) really means “ astonished,” and the same word in verse 13 is translated “ wondered.”

As to Elymas the sorcerer and false prophet of Paphos, we have not sufficient details of his doings from which to argue ; all we know of him is

that he was a sorcerer or conjuror like those already mentioned.

And perhaps none of these were more skillful than those who now call themselves wizards.

At any rate, it is quite certain that men of science, by means of simple processes, can produce effects to-day far more astounding than could the miracle-mongers of old time.

Apollonius of Tyana, is said to have been able to release his leg from its fetters as he lay in prison; but we have had men in our own day, who by similar methods could unbind themselves, however artfully tied with cords.

And at every county *fair* we have those who appear to eat fire, swallow daggers, and perform other astonishing feats in the presence of multitudes, who do not detect the fraud.

A moment's reflection will convince any one that there is really no comparison between the startling effects of magic and the miracles of the Bible.

And in fact, no comparison has ever been attempted except by superficial observers, or for the purpose of misleading those who are such.

A further objection to many of the Bible miracles is that they were really *natural* events, although possibly extraordinary, and certainly exaggerated,—in other words that they were real facts, but due to natural causes.

The advocates of this theory have labored hard to explain away the miracles, and in so doing they have discovered equal learning and ingenuity to combat in their opponents.

To account for the turning of Moses' rod into a serpent, it has been alleged that in the East there are snake-charmers who can train a serpent to remain rigid and extended in form like a staff.

This might explain the trick of the magicians ; but it leaves us in utter ignorance as to how the rod of Moses swallowed up all the rest, when turned into a serpent, and then became a rod again.

The turning of the waters of the Nile into blood, the plagues of frogs, lice, flies and others have all in like manner been accounted for ; but the grand difficulty remains.

Even granting that all these effects *were* produced by natural causes, yet it must be shown why they all followed each other in such rapid succession, and in exact accord with the threatening of Moses.

This cannot be done ; and hence although an occurrence may in one sense be natural, yet by reason of the peculiar circumstances it may become a miracle.

For example, there are cases in which human *skill* can restore sight to the blind ; so far, the restoration of sight may be called a natural event ; but to give sight by means of a word, or a touch of the hand, is a miracle.

The number, succession, and circumstances of the plagues of Egypt suffice to demonstrate them miraculous.

In regard to the destruction of all the first-born there can be but one rational conclusion.



Strange indeed is the pertinacity with which objectors have tried to reduce to the order of natural events, the crossing of the Red Sea, the supplying of manna, and the gift of quails, with other Old Testament miracles.

But the precise juncture at which all these things occurred, and other circumstances connected with them, are sufficient to prove their miraculous character.

Merely regarded as a series of special providential interpositions, and not as standing alone in history, they constitute a succession of miracles, or Divine interpositions for a special purpose.

Taking the Mosaic records as they stand before us, we find in them every indication that the marvelous events in question were truly and properly miracles, and cannot be explained on any other principle.

They are essentially connected with that great history of Divine interpositions of which Christianity is the consummation.

The idea that the narrative is exaggerated is gratuitous ; for a more simple, direct, and natural statement was never penned.

And what is thus true of the miracles of the Pentateuch, is no less applicable to those of the New Testament.

Various devices have been invented by which to refer these to natural causes, but without success.

We are told that the miracle of to-day may become an intelligible and ordinary event to-morrow.

This is true of some of the great triumphs of human *skill*, but it does *not* hold good respecting the miracles of Scripture.

These are just as truly miracles to-day as they ever were ; and even if with the resources of modern science men could *imitate* some of them, yet they would not cease to be miracles.

This is so evident that we are surprised to find recent authors of any pretensions asserting the contrary.

We are very much indebted to modern science for explaining many of the seeming or pretended miracles.

The service thus rendered to the cause of truth is indeed great, and we would make the utmost use of it.

We now understand how the so-called blood of St. Jannarius liquifies, and how certain obscure diseases may be actually healed under particular circumstances without a miracle.

For all this and many other explanations we are truly grateful.

But we fail to discover as yet any mere scientific explanation of the Scripture miracles.

An old objection to miracles is, that they appeal to the love of the marvelous.

It is true that men naturally love to hear of the marvelous, and expect it.

And while society in its primitive simplicity or comparative ignorance, regards some things as being miraculous which are not, yet this very power

of appreciating the wonderful, and this yearning after supernatural intervention supplies an argument in favor of rather than against miracles.

This love of the marvelous in human nature, in the absence of facts to govern it, often leads to curious flights of imagination closely resembling dreams, in that they furnish but little reliable evidence of reality.

The same is true with respect to many of the miracles assigned to Buddha, Mahomet, and to the saints and angels in legendary works of the past ages.

But a peculiarity in the record of Scripture miracles is, that the love of the marvelous, which the writers possessed in common with other men, is wholly eclipsed by the presence and reality of the facts they record.

Not a sentence nor a *syllable* can be found in any of their narratives to indicate that they were in any sense influenced by the presence of this deep-seated principle of our nature.

The utter absence therefore of the one passion to which objectors refer the invention of miraculous stories, is in itself almost a miracle, and a most powerful presumption in favor of the truth of the sacred narrative.

The conduct of those who recorded the miracles or witnessed their performance, is equally candid and trustworthy.

Take for an example the case of Peter and John, when they exclaim, "As if by our *own* power and holiness *we* had made this man to walk!"

To this add the testimony of Paul and Barnabas when they healed the cripple at Lystra.

The people cried out saying, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men!" and they would have sacrificed unto them; but the Apostles rushed into the midst of them, rending their garments and saying, "We also are men of like passions with you!"

Thus we find in the Bible, that the spectators of miracles often wonder, but the recorders and performers of them never.

There is still another objection to which we would call attention, namely, that the miraculous narratives of Scripture are myths and legends of a later date, and were not written by eye-witnesses and contemporaries at all, as claimed.

This is merely a different way of saying that, as a matter of fact, we have *no* evidence in proof of miracles, because the very books which record them are spurious.

The reply to this objection properly falls under a discussion of the question as to the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures.

But not to dismiss the statement in utter silence, as it truly deserves, we may simply say in passing, that there are certainly *some* of the miracles which it would be *impossible* to foist upon the credulity of a nation if they had never occurred.

And yet this impossibility is the *very* thing in which we are asked to *believe* by those who, as skeptics, would seek in like manner to impose

upon the credulity of later ages by their attempt to overthrow the miracles.

If they are *false*, then there must have been some one who invented and published the fiction; as well as some one later who instituted the religious festivals of history in which they were commemorated; and without the ground-facts as a means of suggestion, this would have been as difficult to do at one period as at another, if not wholly impossible.

Truly then the opposer of miracles well deserves the irony expressed by a modern writer when he exclaims, "O infidel, great is thy faith!"

For he believes that a miracle never occurred, but that its record was the invention of a later age; that its commemoration also was introduced long after the supposed event transpired; that a whole nation was *persuaded* to believe in the occurrence of such a miracle, as known to, participated in, and celebrated by their forefathers; and that herein they had followed the sacred books which were given at the time, and were always well known among them, and that nevertheless no such miracle had ever really taken place!

The irresistible conclusion is that the Jewish passover commemorates real events and not a mere fiction.

A similar course of reasoning might be adopted respecting the institution of the Lord's day as a memorial of the great miracle of the Savior's resurrection.

In like manner we could argue in defense of the gospel records which contain the history of our Savior's miracles in general.

They are avowedly written by those who had a personal knowledge of the events they narrated.

They assume the possession of a like knowledge of the same facts by many other witnesses ; for these things were not concealed, neither were the records of them laid up in secret archives, nor restricted to the use of a particular class, but they were published abroad and could be examined by both foes and friends alike.

They were not repudiated and condemned as forgeries at that time, nor is there any evidence that after their first publication any designed corruption of them took place or was even possible ; but on the contrary they were freely circulated throughout the world, and speedily translated into other languages.

If then so gigantic a fraud was perpetrated, where was honor and truth among Christians, where was the zeal of the Jews, and where was the candor of the whole Roman and Pagan world ?

If they were supposed to be false, then a great part of the most civilized portion of mankind must have been seized with something bordering on insanity.

It seems unnecessary to pursue these objections further ; but at the same time, we cannot conclude without referring to the fact that special objections have been made to particular miracles.

For example, the plagues of Egypt have been objected to on moral grounds as being cruel and unjust, and similar assertions have been made concerning other Old Testament miracles.

As to God's purpose and the results attending His action, we can only say that He is the supreme arbiter, and as such, has an infinite right, as He has infinite wisdom to decide what and how He will do.

It is therefore simply impossible for us to believe that *any* act of God is unjust.

It is true that objections have been urged against a *few* miracles as being impossible—for example the miracle of Joshua in staying the sun upon Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon.

But before we assert a miracle to be impossible, we must ascertain the limits of the divine power; and as to the case before us we must first be sure that we fully understand in what the miracle consisted.

In respect to this miracle, the phenomena alone are recorded, and a philosophical explanation may not be apparent; but that it is impossible for us to explain a miracle is no proof either that the miracle never happened, or that it could not have occurred.

It is just as easy for God to stay the earth in its course and to hold in check all the powers of the universe as it was for Him to create the earth and send it whirling through space; but it is not neces-

sary for us to conjecture that any such stupendous miracle was wrought on that eventful day as many suppose it to have been.

The inspired word does not say that the earth with all the machinery of the universe was stopped, but simply that the *sun* was stayed—continuing to throw its light above the horizon of Mount Gibeon.

The more probable explanation of this strange event may be, “that the phenomenon was merely *optical*; that the rotary motion of the earth was not disturbed; but that instead of this the light of the sun and moon was supernaturally *prolonged* by the operation of the same laws of refraction and reflection that ordinarily causes the sun to appear *above* the horizon when it is in reality *below* it.

He who created the heavenly luminaries and established the laws which regulate the transmission of light, may simply at this time have so influenced the medium through which the sun’s rays passed, as to render the sun’s disk still visible long after the time when in ordinary circumstances it would have disappeared.

This of course would have had all the *visible effect* of actually bringing the earth to a pause in its revolution round its axis,” and which, although not being true in reality, yet was so in appearance, and accomplished the practical result for which it was designed.

We thus see how that a very simple *atmospheric* change, causing no disturbance *whatever* to the



universe, may prove quite sufficient to account for this singular phenomenon; and since this answers all the demands in the case, we need not be solicitous in seeking for further explanation of the difficulty.

That the effect produced was miraculous in its character we do not for one moment question; but it was no greater miracle than the stilling of the storm on the Lake of Galilee, or the raising of that storm which swept up from the Mediterranean upon the Philistine army.

Whatever interpretation the Hebrew scholar may give of this miracle, whether it was actually caused by arresting either the sun or the globe, or whether either one of these was only the *apparent* cause of the effect produced, it is immaterial to the truth of the narrative, which in popular language describes the *appearance* rather than the real cause of the effect.

The grand fact remains however, with its significant lessons, that Joshua prayed for help in the hour of anxiety, and the Lord heard his prayer and helped him in this miraculous way.

And the divine power which prolonged the light of the sun on that particular day beyond the time of ordinary days was the same whatever explanation may be given of the special mode by which it was exercised.

The prayer was answered, the desired result produced, and a glorious victory achieved over the enemy.

We find similar objections made to two of the miracles actually wrought by Jesus; namely, His sending the demons into the swine, and His cursing the barren fig-tree.

In respect to the first of these it is plain that the evil spirits had been cast out of a man, and that this in *itself* was our Lord's miracle.

But after His work had been completed, the spirits then asked *permission* to enter into the herd of swine, "and forthwith Jesus gave them leave."

As a matter of fact He did not send them into the swine any more than He had sent them into the man; He only permitted both.

Why He suffered the destruction of the swine we cannot say, any more than we can say why He permits the self-destruction of many other creatures in man's possession, except that in this case, according to the Jewish law, the swine were pronounced unclean, and therefore they were transgressing the law by engaging in this kind of traffic.

In the case of the withering of the fig-tree it is different.

Our Lord was on His way with the disciples from Bethany to Jerusalem.

He saw a fig-tree in the way, and being hungry, "He came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever. And presently the fig-tree withered away." (Matt. 21 : 17-22.)

This fig-tree could not have received more sympathy had it been a reasonable creature.

But it was a tree ; and because it was barren and failed to fulfill the end of its being, our Lord by the exercise of His power judicially condemned it to speedy decay and death ; for in the morning it was found "dried up by the roots."

And by means of the result Christ would take the opportunity thus created, for teaching His disciples and us a lesson of the divine judgment upon the mere leaves of ostentatious show and religious presumption, accompanied with spiritual barrenness.

As a matter of fact, however, our Savior wrought no miracle of judgment upon any conscious being ; for in the previous case the miracle consisted in His casting out the legion of devils from the man, and not in His suffering them to enter into the swine.

Except in one or two instances we find no objections urged against the miracles of the Apostles.

The miraculous conversion of Saul was not the act of man, and the most that has been attempted against it is to suggest that the dazzling brightness seen was lightning, and that the sound heard was thunder.

The death of Ananias and Sapphira, although declared by the Apostles, was emphatically irrespective of any agency on their part.

The blindness of Elymas was inflicted in accordance with St. Paul's words ; but it was only temporary, and led to important results.

It is admitted by all alike, that the miracles re-

corded in the New Testament are in harmony with the Gospel as a dispensation of grace and love to man ; and that the two or three apparent exceptions reveal both judgment and mercy.

They have a system and structure of their own, most wonderfully adapted to convey heavenly truth to the dwellers on earth, although the visit often breaks in upon their contented slumber within the narrow region of sensible things.

They seem to be in themselves, then, like intrusions upon the dominion and infractions of the permanence of nature's lower laws already known to men.

But in truth they convey to men the products of a nobler and higher world of thought, the laws of which are equally firm, and even firmer than those which the miracles seem to reverse ; they are not only higher in their range, wider in their reach, and deeper in their design, but unchangeable and everlasting.

That higher realm comprises the vast scheme and counsel of redeeming love.

Its foundations are the attributes of Him who is unchangeable.

Its heights and depths measure the wide range of moral and spiritual truth.

Its rich productions are all those various lessons of duty, laws of holiness, and instincts of purity, wisdom and grace, which will nourish and gladden the souls of the redeemed forever.

Physical laws may be firm, but the moral laws of the divine government are far more so.

The pillars of earth may tremble and be astonished ; but no change can assail that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

In concluding our discussion upon this subject, let us consider more definitely the *validity* or use of miracles in the system of Christian doctrine.

The sufficiency of Christ's power for the supply of human wants and for the removal of human ills, flows as a necessary consequence from the admission of the reality of His miracles.

Christ's miracles not only bear testimony to the goodness of His nature, and exhibit His divine power, but they afford avenues for the overflow of His compassion towards suffering humanity.

His power was always set in motion at the instance of mercy and goodness.

The exhibition of such power as He possessed, divorced from goodness to direct and mercy to control it, would present Him to us as a being of terror ; but when that same power is combined with goodness and seasoned with mercy, it shows us a Savior omnipotent to save and ready to forgive, which inspires confidence and sweet repose.

Christ's miracles were the works of a love that could no more keep itself from working, and stand aloof from the crisis of human history, without putting forth its power to redeem man from the evils of destruction within and beneath him, than in the present condition of things the sun could cease to shine or the rain to fall.

Love is the essential law of His being ; and for its manifestation in works of love for the human race was the object of His coming into the world and sojourning among men.

How different then in aim and purpose are the works of Christ from those of legerdemain, in ancient and modern times.

The latter were performed for the purpose of startling the community, for obtaining influence, or procuring wealth to the performers.

Christ wrought for the good of others alone ; while wizards and spiritualists only aimed at exciting the curiosity and preying upon the credulity of men, He sought to impress, elevate, and purify the heart.

Christ's miracles were the signs of the kingdom of heaven, they have upon them the sign-*manual* of heaven ; whereas the miracles so-called of childish petulance and winking Madonnas, bear the sign-*manual* of folly and fanaticism.

The miracles of Jesus are full of human sympathy and tenderness.

All His works of healing prove beyond doubt His ability to help us in all our extremity of weakness, and that His heart can sympathize with us in all our sorrows.

They thus enable us to discern the workings of His loving heart, as well as to feel the uplifting force of His omnipotent arm.

While they add beauty to the bridal robe at Cana, they add glory also to the burial shroud at Nain.

They bring light into the blind eyes of mendicants, health into the poisoned blood of lepers, and strength into the withered bodies of helpless paralytics,—but never were they performed for the sake of mere ostentation or show.

Had there been a single instance in which they were wrought to amaze, startle, or astound, then would they have created a suspicion of His vanity, and brought discredit upon His mission.

But on the contrary, they were accomplished so lovingly, and withal so unobtrusively, that we are compelled to read in them a greater desire for the well-being of others than for His own renown.

This yearning desire constituted the sole object of His earthly ministry, and it is the same that He now fulfills for us from the throne of God in heaven.

We learn from the manifestation of this desire, in the work of miracles, his intense interest in mankind ;—an interest that has not ceased with His exaltation, but is undying, and asserts itself still for us in providential deliverances and interpositions of His grace and mercy.

Although He no longer performs *miracles* in token of that interest as in the past, yet He does continue the exercise of that same power of which they were the pattern and pledge.

This abiding interest which Jesus still exercises in the well-being of God's creatures to-day, teaches us that these special providences which we experience are due to the same spirit as that which re-

vealed itself in miracles, since they too were wrought sovereignly and in harmony with infinite wisdom and love.

These providences, in many instances as mysterious as miracles themselves, while they reveal a heart of love that beats with sympathy for all, are determined by an unerring counsel, and like the miracles, dealt out in such a way as to save man from despair and at the same time keep him from presumption.

Miracles are only the enacted parables of the mysteries of grace.

They are the gospel of salvation in deeds and symbols; for Jesus came into the world not merely to minister to the temporal good of man, but in so doing to win the soul also from deadly evil.

He is therefore the *Redeemer* of men as well as their loving benefactor,—ministering to soul as well as body.

He opens eyes that have been blinded by sin, unstops ears that have been deafened by the din of iniquity, cleanses the heart that has been fouled by moral leprosy, quickens the conscience that has been stifled by wrong-doing, and casts out devils, which have too long warmed themselves by the altar-fires of man's inner nature.

He changes the bitter waters of sorrow into the sweet wine of joy; He converts the coarse loaf received in faith by us at the eucharist into the real "bread of heaven" to our souls, and multiplies its efficiency to satisfy the hunger of the fam-



ishing millions; and to all His disciples who go forth at His word and in faith cast their net "on the right side," He rewards with a multitude of converts in return for their obedience and toil.

The miracles of Jesus all fraternize with these spiritual truths; they present these things to the eye, and in the world of sense, by means of symbols, proclaim what the penitent soul only can find out to perfection through the exercise of faith.

Christ's miracles then, however viewed, bring to light His matchless tenderness, His abundant love, and His holy purpose born of both to help and save mankind,—and if they do this, then beyond question they are of infinite worth.

It seems reasonable, therefore, to infer from the relation which these wonderful works of Jesus bear to His earthly mission, that the religion which he founded must be supernatural and divine.

It is not likely that He would have introduced Himself to the world through these marvelous works had He not designed to leave the impression that while they should cease, having accomplished their purpose, yet the Christianity of which He was the author would live on, and derive its perpetuity from unseen forces, accomplishing its work through that same omnipotent power, which at that time and before their eyes raised the dead to life, cast out demons, and changed the storm-tossed sea into a peaceful calm.

Let us then accept the inference which it suggests, namely; that only the supernatural and di-

vine element as manifested in miracles can explain the preservation of Christianity from its early foes ; that this power alone can account for its progress amidst the fermenting rationalism and deadly antagonism of such a world as this ; and that only the interposition of Almightyness can unravel the mystery of its efficacy in saving the sin-hardened and sin-debased souls of earth.

Christianity then is not a mere earth-born and earth-bound system ; it came down to us from heaven, and is designed to carry back to the same source whence it came all those who embrace and live out its saving principles.

And although after all that may be said and learned, should there be those who still reject the miracles of Christ, yet we have the miracle of Christ Himself, whose coming into the world was itself a miracle ; and who assures us the communication of the life of God to men through faith in Him is the greatest of all miracles,—the essence and aim of all ; and further, that it is the standing miracle of all after ages.

THE PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIANITY IS AN EVIDENCE  
THAT THE BIBLE IS OF DIVINE AUTHORITY.

When we consider the obstacles which, in primitive times, opposed the progress of the gospel, the feebleness of the means employed to promote it, and the nature of its doctrines and requirements as being hostile to the natural feelings and char-

acter of men, there is no other reasonable way to account for its wide and rapid diffusion, than by regarding it as of Divine origin and authority.

The progress of Christianity, as presented in the gospel, has been marked by the most notable triumphs, and by the most beneficial of consequences to the world.

It has been the source of untold comfort and blessings to the race, and the cause of unmeasured happiness.

Behind it and around we behold the ruins of more than one defiant Jericho, which stood as impediments and hindrances to individual and social advancement,—systems, theories, superstitions and speculations of men, which could not resist its onward march.

The well-attested fact stands out before us that Christianity is gaining ground in every land, and among every nation almost on the globe,—adding to its advancing hosts at the rate of more than 6,000 each day.

Christianity has doubled its numbers since the beginning of the nineteenth century,—the date fixed upon by Voltaire before which he prophesied that it would disappear from the face of the earth.

During the two years of 1881 and 1882, six and a half millions of Bibles were given away to those anxious to possess them.

Under the auspices of Christianity, there have been built within our own country, during the past

ten years; over 28,000 churches, besides schools, colleges, asylums, hospitals, &c.

Since the year 1800, the population of our country has increased nine-fold, while the communicants of evangelical churches have increased, during the same period, twenty-seven fold,—or three times faster in the ratio of its progress than the population.

The census of 1880 and other statistical tables show that thirty-five of the fifty millions of our population were at that time members and adherents of evangelical churches,—the Roman Catholics having 6,250,000 more,—the liberal Christians 801,104, leaving less than 8,000,000 to be divided among Jews, Pagans, Mormons, nothingarians and infidels.

Before thirty years had elapsed after the death of Christ, His church had spread from Palestine throughout Syria; through almost all the numerous districts of Lesser Asia; through Greece and the islands of the Ægean sea, the sea-coast of Africa, and even into Italy and Rome.

The number of converts in the several cities is expressed by the terms, “a great number,” “great multitudes,” and “much people.”

In the thirtieth year after the beginning of the Christian era, the terrible persecution under Nero kindled its fires, at which time Christians had become so numerous in Rome, that by the testimony of Tacitus, a great *multitude* were seized.

After forty years more, we are told in a cele-

brated letter from Pliny, the Roman governor of Pontus and Bythinia, that Christianity had long subsisted in these provinces, though so remote from Judea.

Many of all ages and of every rank, of both sexes likewise, were accused before Pliny of being Christians.

What he calls the contagion of this new superstition had seized, not only cities, but the lesser towns also, and the open country, so that the heathen temples were almost forsaken, few victims were purchased for sacrifice, and a long intermission of the sacred solemnities had taken place.

Justin Martyr describes the wide extent of Christianity in his time; and Clemens Alexandrinus writes that, "the doctrine of the Master of Christianity did not remain in Judea, but is spread throughout the whole world, in every nation, and village and city, converting both whole households and separate individuals, having already brought over to the truth not a few of the philosophers themselves.

Christianity comes down to us in our time as the survivor of all systems, and, after successfully confronting every imaginable form of error, each of which has in turn gone to its almost forgotten place in history, itself lives on unharmed and unchecked; and so will it come through every revolution of thought, persecution and conflict of the ages, only to shine forth more beautiful and brilliant—the glory of heaven's choicest gift in Christ, and the richest treasure of men on earth.

As an evidence of its glorious consummation in the future, let us contrast it with all other forms of religion in the past, and see how it has not only withstood, but survived and outstripped them all in its progress.

Contrast it with Paganism for example.

And in so doing, we refer not to that low, degraded form of paganism found among the Indians of our own continent or the tribes of Africa, but of the higher type of paganism in its palmyest days—during the period of Grecian philosophy and the Roman power, when its lofty temples shone with splendor, its poets sang with grace, and when sculpture and architecture gathered around it their forms of beauty.

We speak of it at the time when it had its men of strength and power who stood as pillars for its defence.

Skepticism then existed no less than now.

There were skeptical philosophers not a few, who both doubted and denied ; but all the skepticism of Greece or Rome never closed one pagan temple, or dethroned one imaginary deity.

In the midst of all the skepticism then prevailing, the popular faith in paganism moved on as before, erecting its temples and crowding them with devotees and worshippers as in the past.

Judaism taught the knowledge of the one true God, and yet it made advances against idolatry.

But on the contrary, idolatry brought forth its terrible fruits in the midst of Judaism,—the very

people who had heard the voice of the living God, themselves turning and serving idols.

There is scarcely a stranger story perhaps in all history than the record of this same ancient people who, while they looked upon Mount Sinai bathed in the glory-light of heaven, and heard the voice of Almighty God speaking in tones of thunder, yet before the sound had hardly died away from their ears, made a golden calf and bowed to it, saying, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

But what skeptical philosophy could not do, and what Judaism could not do, Christianity has accomplished most gloriously.

The men who first embraced it, although without earthly position or influence, but persecuted, imprisoned and reproached for their faith, went forth telling the story of a crucified and risen Redeemer; and as they told this story among men, the temples of paganism became deserted and their idols fell, until to-day there is not a god worshipped which claimed the homage of men during the reign of Grecian philosophy, and the glory of Rome.

How radical and sweeping the transformation wrought, when we recall the fact that no human being anywhere to-day bows the knee to Jupiter; no assembly prostrates itself before Mars; and no garments saved from shipwreck are hung in the temple of Neptune!

Where then, we may well ask, is paganism to-

day? if the above results have been achieved through the preaching of the cross.

It is crowded back into the *dark* parts of the earth, bowing down before misshapen stocks and stones, while Christianity is marching on and continues to make inroads upon its strongholds everywhere; so that no man of learning and genius now dreams that paganism will ever again become a power in this earth.

As a matter of historical fact, we learn that paganism has not made a convert from Christianity in all these ages; but on the other hand, Christianity has made a countless number from paganism.

What of the result in India, where it has come in conflict with Brahmanism,—a system which has much in it that is beautiful, many precepts that are sublime, and many declarations grand?

Of India which has been brought up under this system, we have only this to say, that 200,000,000 of her people, despite their boasted Brahmanism, are controlled by less than 30,000,000 English people, who formerly occupied an island at one of the earth's extremities.

Do any ask *why* this contrast between the two peoples, and how to *account* for the difference so marked?

We answer, because the system of paganism fails to develop men, while that of Christianity *does* develop manhood, giving it the pre-eminence in mental strength and power.



Again, let us compare Christianity with the teachings of Confucius, as we find them embodied in the life and character of the Chinese.

And in doing so we call to mind the declarations of Voltaire, Volney and others, who spoke of the wonderful influence of this particular form of heathenism.

They told of its former glory;—they said the Chinese under its development were in possession of gunpowder, a knowledge of the compass, and that there was something grand in the system.

We have lived to see the day when many of the leading political economists of this country feel Chinese civilization to be a positive *injury*, that it contaminates all those who come in contact with it, that in character it is infinitely beneath that of many prisoners for crime ; and therefore the cry is, “ The Chinese must go,” and why ?

Because the civilization engendered by this system of heathenism is not only far inferior, but demoralizing to our own.

If this be true, as asserted by many, then by so much at least it tends not only to depreciate the value put upon the teachings of Confucius, but also to reflect discredit upon the character and knowledge of the men who have taken occasion to speak in such high-sounding praise of the civilization produced by that system.

But to enable us properly to judge between the relative value of Christianity and heathenism, enough may be learned from the character of their

products and efficiency for higher development, in the fact, that China, with her 4,000 years or more of historical advantage, is to-day bowing down to young America and sending her sons to be educated in the practical arts and science of government here, under the influences of our exalted Christian civilization.

Her sister province Japan, likewise, is to-day asking for and receiving our teachers and system of schools.

And the result is, that in Japan the Bible is being adopted as the text book in some of the schools, and the young people are beginning to behold the superior light and glory which emanate from Christianity alone.

The system of Christianity has done more than merely to act upon the side of the defensive.

It has likewise been progressive in its character ; and as a result has commanded the respect, if not assent, of the greatest and best minds in all lands.

Christianity is to-day enlarging the fields of general intelligence, exercising a controlling influence in all the relations of life, and it furnishes the foundation for the most firmly-established, sweeping, and benignant movements of modern times.

Its present position among the nations of the earth is a stronger evidence of its divinity than any possessed by men in Apostolic times.

There is the beauty of majesty upon her brow, the lustre of intelligence in her eye, and the glory

of heaven on her cheek; she goes forth to conquer.

We see her traversing mountains, and sweeping over plains; and with wide-open hand scattering untold blessings upon the sons of men.

But we are told of infidelity also, and the value of its claims.

Yes, of infidelity! and what is it?

It is a theory of spiritual negation, and therefore without any system of moral activity.

Where for example are its temples, schools, hospitals and asylums?

What has it ever done or tried to do for man in any land as an organized system?

We may say, comparatively nothing.

It is true that there have been men, in a certain sense, strong, learned, and wise men, who have been skeptical; who in theory and belief have been infidels; but they have never embodied their creed in an organized system; they have never worked together powerfully as an organized body for the elevation of the race in any sense.

There was one nation, and only one of which we know, that ever accepted the theory of infidelity to any great extent.

It was France that decreed, "There is no God, and death is an eternal sleep;" and the result was that ere long the streets of Paris ran with human blood.

Society was upheaved from its very foundations, and men were glad in that day to return even to

the poorest temples offered, for the sake of finding relief from the errors and terrors into which infidelity had plunged them.

Infidelity we may safely say has had its day.

In proof of this statement, take for example the experience of the last century, and see how the encyclopediasts, Voltaire and Volney, influenced the public mind for a time.

A few years ago the Evangelical Alliance met in Berlin.

And strange to say, in the very room of the old palace of Frederick, where Voltaire studied and wrote part of his works, and where he and Frederick imagined with themselves that they were about to overthrow Christianity, there this Alliance met to consult the best means of hastening the spread of Christianity over the entire world.

Voltaire asserted that he lived in the "twilight of Christianity;" and so he did.

It was not however, as he fancied, in the evening twilight, soon to merge into the shadows of deeper darkness; but it was the morning twilight rather, ushering in the more glorious day when the Sun of Righteousness should shine in the brighter splendor of spiritual beauty over the whole earth.

A century or more ago, England was under the dominion of infidelity; and the result was not only a corruption of her morals, but the degradation of society in general.

But with the reaction that followed soon after,

there came forth those works of Butler, and Godwin, and a host of others who defended the principles of Christianity.

And the result is, that to-day we have a purer, clearer, and *stronger* system of Christianity because of those attacks made by infidelity.

But who survived the glorious reaction of religious thought above referred to?

In the language of science, we may truly say, none but "*the fittest.*"

Where then are the infidels of that day, and who by their boasted works were to turn the world upside down?

The men themselves have passed away like all others; and their works are fast disappearing, even like the meteor's flash or tracks upon the ocean strand; so that ere long they will have left no trace behind.

But Christianity still lives and moves on with *increasing* power and momentum to-day.

Her churches for the worship of the true and living God, stand as monuments of honor and glory all over England, America and many other lands.

Her Christian schools are turning out pupils of like faith by the thousands, who will continue to perpetuate her saving principles to the latest generations.

Christianity is now taking the children by the hand; and thus joining together both old and young, they sing with one acclaim, "*All hail the power of Jesus' name, &c.*"

Scientific giants from the ranks of her opposing hosts have often come out with their beams of towering rhetoric and threatening menace, challenging her to combat; but the smooth pebbles taken from God's truth has never failed to lay them low, vanquished at her feet.

Materialists, Pantheists, Atheists, French Encyclopedists and rabble-crowds of outlawed Communists have, at times, united their efforts to overcome and crush her power; but all has proved in vain.

For by the majesty of her inherent, supernatural power she has met and successfully withstood every assault.

All that skeptics have ever accomplished since Christ came into the world has not shaken the confidence or disturbed the faith of the world in one single truth of Christianity.

The storms which shook Rome into ruins only nursed Christianity into greatness.

The wars of Carthage, the victories of Hannibal, together with the triumphs of Scipio, Paulus, Marius, Sylla, Pompey, and Cæsar;—the fall of Greece and Syria, Egypt, Spain, Gaul and Britain, appear to have taken place with special reference to the new religion, and at the same time resulted in its favor.

Wrapped up within it are regal potencies which, in subduing, moulding and controlling human life, are more powerful than any earthly monarch ever knew;—potencies which in their character are irresistible, inexhaustible and imperishable.

From its historic progress in the past, despite all opposition, and the position which it holds in the civilized world to-day, it is clear that Christianity must have come from God.

None but the Christian system has disclosed to us the innermost nature of God ; and none but this has laid bare in its peculiar centre-point the moral nature of man.

Of all religions, Christianity alone has taught us that God is love ; and it portrays to us as no other the full guilt of man on account of sin.

No other religion knows anything of the grace of free pardon and forgiveness, nor of the history of that grace which teaches that herein is to be found the only true source of moral life.

No other religion is, in the proper sense of the term, one of redemption and regeneration through faith in a vicarious atonement.

Christianity is the one only inexhaustible fountain of spiritual life which constantly replenishes itself from itself, and sends forth a stream of renewing, transforming energy capable of purifying the race, and carrying it forward to the highest attainment of the noblest purposes.

It emanated from the work of God's Spirit upon the seed of truth planted in the depths of man's soul by the preaching of the Word ; and by the same means it has spread, like hallowed fire, from heart to heart, until all who have embraced it have become purified and luminous with the light of heaven.

The more thoroughly men embrace infidelity, the more entirely do they become the slaves of sin ; but the more perfectly they embrace the principles of Christianity, the more perfectly do they become examples of whatever is lovely and of good report.

And hence, notwithstanding all the objections which infidels and skeptics have brought against Christianity, yet it has nothing to fear, since for 1800 years it has responded to the supreme necessity of the soul of man, and is the epitome of all that is sublime, just, and pure.

Kingdoms rise and fall ; moral earthquakes shake the earth ; but Christianity withstands all, and still moves on in triumph because God is in it.

Every revolution, oppression and persecution, the wrath of men and rage of opposing fanatics are, under the mighty hand of God, but parts of the great fermenting process which the world is undergoing from the leaven of Christianity.

And never will this terminate, until it has regenerated the world, and made it resemble heaven.

THE DIVINE ORIGIN AND AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE  
GROWS OUT OF THE HARMONY OF ITS SEVERAL PARTS  
AMONG THEMSELVES, AND WITH THE TEACHINGS OF  
NATURE.

Between the Old and New Testaments, and the different parts of each, there is a most remarkable and perfect agreement.



The designs, the end, the doctrines taught, and duties urged, the hopes encouraged and motives presented, are throughout the same in spirit, and are consistent one with another.

The works of forty different authors inspired of God,—the earliest and the latest being 1500 years apart,—are here collected into one single volume.

They were composed in times of heathen darkness, when the mightiest and most civilized empires of the world were bowing down to stocks and stones, worshipping “gods many and lords many,” and their Pantheon contained the represented impersonation of almost every impure passion and debasing lust.

In language, character and special object, no less than in the time and style of their composition, these several books differ widely.

And yet upon examination we find that the great outlines of their thought and teachings are everywhere the same.

There are evidences of development, but no real discrepancy; we often note lines of contrast, but no contradiction.

There is a unity of tone and purpose, of spirit and plan, throughout the whole Bible.

Amid all its diversity of matter and forms of expression, it is animated by one comprehensive thought, illustrating one system of doctrine.

How appropriate too, the name Holy Bible, which was chosen as a title for the entire collection.

Matthew Arnold conceived the idea of *righteousness* to be the central one running through the Old Testament.

But the fact is that a much stronger term is required to express its prevailing thought than even Arnold uses; one which is higher, purer, and more comprehensive in its scope, namely, *holiness*; for that it is which forms the key-note of the Bible from beginning to end.

Even during the ancient Mosiac age, when the condition of society was such that many things far from being ideally right were permitted because of the hardness of their hearts; when many of the political regulations reflected the imperfect spirit of the times; yet, dealing with the practical rather than the ideal,—as such regulations ought always to do,—even then, we see on the mitre of the high priest, the shining plate of pure gold, and read thereon the inscription of “Holiness to the Lord.”

With such illustrations as this occurring throughout, the attentive Bible student finds the conviction growing upon him, that while the external history is very much like what would be expected of the age, and the political regulations are made to conform thereto, as in a certain degree they must be, yet the law proper, both in its moral and ceremonial branches, held up as an ideal before the people nothing short of perfect holiness.

In proof of the existing harmony upon this point throughout Scripture, we find that the key-note

which was struck by the law under Moses, was voiced along the whole line of the prophets, caught up by Christ the last of the prophets, and breathed forth by Him in a tender, sweeter strain, and so prolonged by all His Apostles, until at the close of the book of Revelation we are introduced into the "holy city, new Jerusalem," into which "there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth, neither worketh abomination, or maketh a lie;" but over which reigns the "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.

By this we are taught that the God of the Bible is a holy God; and also that holiness of heart is necessary to a complete salvation and fellowship with Him.

We are expressly warned over and over again, that without holiness man cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

And when we look at the means provided for leading men to holiness of heart and life, we do not find a *variety* of methods prescribed by these different authors such as we might expect from those so diverse in their education, talents, temperaments and surroundings; but on the contrary, one consistent plan of the kingdom of God is presented by all, and the standard held up by each is holiness.

Then there is that still more wonderful harmony and unity referred to by our Lord Himself, which appears in clearest outline when we recognize the fact that all the manifold testimony of these various books points to and centres in Christ.

All through the Old Testament there is a convergence of hope looking for the coming of Christ, and all through the New there is a convergence of faith resting on the Christ as having already come, and in whom was fulfilled the hope of Israel, a unity which fully harmonizes with the claim made by the Apostle Peter on behalf of the prophets, when he speaks of them as "searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

And in the same way it will be found that there is a unity of sentiment, as expressed by all the different authors, touching the great subject of revelation,—embracing as it does both God and man.

Thus by a careful inspection of the numerous books of the Old and New Testaments, we find that the spirit of unity and harmony pervades all.

The moral corruption and sinfulness of man is a doctrine in which the unity of Scripture is very striking.

It is a truth which is opposed to every instinct of human pride, and is therefore wholly ignored, disputed or denied in every form of false religion.

And yet upon this subject the Bible is most explicit in its teachings from first to last.

We meet with it first in the account given of the world before the flood, and it reappears in the promise after Noah's sacrifice.

We behold the evidence of it in the rapid growth

of idolatry, and in the sudden dispersion of mankind after the confusion of tongues; we read its awful truth in the history and overthrow of the cities of the plain, and in the reason assigned for suspending judgment upon the Amorites.

The long series of sad events narrated in Exodus, Numbers, Joshua and Judges, are but illustrations of the same truth.

But it is set forth in a more impressive form by the personal confessions of the most eminent saints of God.

The writings of David, Job, and Ezra, together with the prophecy of Malachi, all bear testimony to this awful doctrine of man's sinfulness.

Coming on down to the new dispensation, and we find the Gospels opening with the stern rebuke of sin by John the Baptist, and closing with a solemn repetition of the same from the lips of the Savior Himself, as for example, when He exclaims, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

The most complete outline of the doctrines of Christianity, as given in the Epistle to Romans, lays the foundation for that system in the same truth of man's utter sinfulness, and confirms it by seven quotations from the Psalms and prophecies of Isaiah.

The combined testimony of the Bible from first to last concerning man is, that with all his noble powers and capacities, he is a sinful and fallen creature, without the requisite knowledge or abil-

ity to save himself, and therefore needs Divine power and grace to restore him to the favor of God, and prepare him for a world of purity and love.

A declaration of this humbling fact is made by our Lord, when He presents Himself as the lowly gate-way, through which alone we can enter into the household of faith.

His sermon upon the mount, applicable to the whole world of mankind, opens with the promise, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The doctrine of redemption, and of the great Redeemer, through whom alone salvation is to be found, is a truth which is common to the whole of Scripture, and marks its Divine and secret unity.

We meet with it in the earliest promise made in Paradise, along with the sentence pronounced upon the serpent, after the fall.

"The seed of the woman" is a title of that Son of the Virgin, who was, in the fullness of time, "born of a woman, made under the law to *redeem* them that are under the law."

This glowing fact runs like a silver cord, or shines like a stream of sunlight amidst the clouds and darkness, through the whole course of Old Testament prediction.

The great Redeemer is successively revealed as the seed of Abraham, who is to possess the gate of his enemies, and bless all the nations of the earth; as the Shiloh of Judah's tribe, to whom

shall be the gathering, or obedience of Gentiles ; as the fulfiller of the types of Isaac's sacrifice and resurrection, of Joseph's rejection by his brethren, and exaltation to the throne, of the paschal lamb, the smitten rock, and the brazen serpent ; as the prophet like Moses, and the son of David, who is to sit on David's throne and reign forever.

In the Psalms and the Prophets this great promise is unfolded with ever-growing clearness ; from the type in Jonah's history, through all the glorious predictions in Isaiah, of Immanuel, of the root of Jesse, and of the man of sorrows, even down to the parting voice of the Spirit by Malachi, saying, " Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise, with healing in his wings."

The New Testament, from first to last, exhibits these promises of the older covenant, as centering in the Lord Jesus, and actually fulfilled, and closes with a solemn invitation to every weary and thirsty wanderer of earth, to come and refresh his soul with the life-giving streams of heavenly grace.

Again, the doctrinal unity of the Scripture is clearly manifest in the way of salvation by faith alone.

As man fell by unbelief of God's word, so it is by faith only that he can ever be recovered from that condition.

This truth is implied in the histories of Abel, of Enoch, and of Noah, but it is expressly revealed in the person of Abraham, who " believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness,"

The Apostle Paul spends a whole chapter in unfolding faith as the secret main-spring of every example of holy obedience throughout the Old Testament.

And almost every page of the New Testament enforces the *same* truth.

Its first message is, "Repent and believe the gospel."

The promise of our Lord to the father of the demoniac child was, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

His command to His own disciples was, "Have faith in God;" His parting exhortation, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me;" His searching inquiry for self-examination, "Do ye now believe?"

His divine law respecting the blessing and the curse is, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned."

The message of the Apostles is the same,—“Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This same line of demarkation *closes* the sacred history—"Some believed the words which were spoken, and some believed not."

The first part of Paul's Epistle to the Romans is wholly occupied with developing the office of faith as the means of salvation.

His Epistle to the Galatians expounds the same truth, in contrast with the doctrine of ritual ob-



servance and ceremonial service as a ground of merit.

In Ephesians it is summed up in the great maxim, "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."

In Philippians the Apostle links it with his own experience, and his intense longing to renounce all legal merit and claim, and enjoy the righteousness of faith.

In the Epistle of James, the contrast is shown between a dead, counterfeit faith, which works by vain boasting, and the living faith which works by love, and moulds the life into obedience to the will of God.

St. Peter describes the efficacy of this faith in filling the soul with deep and holy joy, while the beloved John declares it to be the principle of new *life* in the soul born anew by the Spirit, the source of spiritual strength, the victory by which the world is overcome.

The need of atonement for the sinner's acceptance is another doctrine in which the unity of Scriptural teaching is apparent.

The bloody sacrifice of Abel was accepted, and the bloodless offering of Cain was refused.

Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, all offer sacrifice, and thus find acceptance with God.

The Israelites are preserved by the sprinkled blood of the lamb of the passover, when the first-born of Egypt perish.

The many Levitical sacrifices, especially those of the day of atonement, teach the same lesson,

In the writings of Isaiah all these types of the law are referred to their great ante-type, the suffering Messiah, who was to come, as for example, "All we like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

In Daniel, Messiah the Prince is said to "finish transgression, and make an end of sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness," and all this when He is "cut off," or slain by a violent death.

Our Lord applies these predictions to Himself by His allusion to the brazen serpent and in these impressive words ;—The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

St. Paul, writing to the Hebrews, sums up the whole doctrine thus revealed in the great aphorism, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission."

The gospel opens with the voice of John the Baptist in the wilderness, crying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

And it closes with that voice of the elder in heaven; who in describing the character and experience of the redeemed ones there says, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore are they before the throne of God."

The Scriptures alone have proved themselves to be quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged

sword, mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds, and able to make men wise unto salvation.

Unless these Scriptures are from God, how is it possible for this marvelous harmony to pervade them, and for them to produce such saving effects upon the minds and hearts of the children of men?

They have known in the past, they do now, and will *continue*, to know of the doctrines whether it be of God.

They find a blessed agreement between the representations of the Scripture and feelings of their own hearts, and they cannot *doubt* its Divine authority.

THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES MAY BE  
INFERRED FROM THE POWER WHICH HAS ATTENDED  
THEM, AND FROM THE GREAT AND GOOD EFFECTS  
WHICH THEY HAVE PRODUCED IN THE WORLD.

The influence of the Scriptures has been far-reaching, and vastly beneficial on the moral, intellectual and political interests of mankind.

Appearing at a period of the deep and unprecedented degeneracy of the race, it produced at once among the pagan nations transformations of moral character and habits which have ever since astonished the world.

Let any person compare the state of the Christian world—the spirit of its laws, the tone of pub-

lic sentiment and morals, its progress in learning and civilization, its humane and charitable institutions—with the state of the heathen in ancient or in modern times, and he will see what are the tendency and effects of Christianity.

This is the grand *experimental* test of the truth and divine authority of Christianity.

It breathed at once a new spirit and a new moral power into a world actually ruining itself.

In Jesus Christ, the morality of the world has reached its culminating point.

The moral law formed in Him a tabernacle in which to dwell.

Being so thoroughly incorporated in His life and character, it became invested with a personal and living interest such as it never possessed before.

Christianity exerted a powerful reforming influence upon humanity from the first, not only upon those who already called themselves Christians, but upon all to whom it became known.

And history proves that in a short time it changed for the better the whole aspect of society.

It banished from public view, if it did not entirely remove, detestable vices, at which even philosophers on account of their familiarity with them, had ceased to be shocked ; and it cultivated a love for truth and purity, and inspired a benevolence for mankind unknown before in the most elevated and polished countries of the world.

During the last three centuries, the gospel has

not failed to produce moral effects equal to those which followed its first proclamation.

Although old in time, it is ever *new* in its power and influence.

It has been constantly reforming the lives of the most vicious of mankind.

It has infused into the breast of general society a degree of moral principle absolutely miraculous.

All our knowledge, all our improvements in the arts and sciences, and all our past history, would not save us from ferocity; our very festivities would probably become as brutal as those of the halls of *Odin*.

If only its influence upon the present, and its effects during all the centuries of the past were withdrawn, the moral condition of the most enlightened nations would become more deplorable and sad than at present is that of the most abject and degraded heathen country.

The moral always includes the spiritual.

Christianity has produced the most real, fervid and exalted piety ever known in the history of the world.

It has diffused the love of God instantly through human breasts which before had been wholly destitute of it.

It has enkindled within the souls of some a devotion to the great Author of their existence like unto that with which seraphim glow at the shrine of heaven.

Christianity has imparted the highest delicacy

to the parental, conjugal and filial affections; and at the same time it has exalted the institution of marriage, which is the source and guardian of all the domestic virtues.

A Christian wife and mother is something more excellent than society ever dreamed of where the Bible is unknown.

Christianity has elevated woman by enabling men to form more enlightened and correct opinions on every subject, and by inspiring them with a superior generosity and benevolent sense of justice, to nobleness of quality and virtue in whomsoever found.

It has made woman better in *every* sense, and is the harbinger of better things still in *store* for her, as it brings into requisition those ordained principles and means for the higher development of what is loveliest and most valuable in her traits of character.

For this reason she is esteemed far more excellent even *now* in Christian lands than in any other; and because prompted by motives to influence and power which the Bible presents, she rises to a moral elevation that commands the highest admiration.

If Christianity had done nothing more for society than to rescue woman from her past state of degradation, and assign to her that influential and honorable position, which in every Christian country she holds to-day, it would scarcely be possible to over-estimate its benefits to the world.

In Moslem and heathen nations, females are considered as an inferior order of beings, and therefore are not permitted to share in the conversation and social pleasures of their lords, but looked upon as either toys or drudges.

In some instances it is claimed that they possess no souls; and in all, the most limited education even is denied them.

What a difference therefore between the family circle in Turkey and an American or English home.

In proportion as a people become more thoroughly imbued with Christian principles, by so much does the gentler sex rise in general consideration, and occupy a position of greater exaltation and respect.

In France and Italy, where there is comparatively little vital godliness, we find woman treated with much less regard, more in fact as a plaything than as a help-meet for man.

The effects of female culture and influence, especially that exercised by Christian mothers in England and America, are recognized as a most salutary factor in the elevation of society.

How many good and great men of the past and present have traced their best impressions to maternal counsels.

George Herbert tells us that when pursuing his studies at Cambridge, his mother's image seemed to hang up like a picture in his little chamber, restraining him from vice, calming down passion, and luring him on to labor.

Who has not admired the closing lines of the epilogue which Mr. Lamb wrote to Sheridan's tragedy of "Pizarro," in which as a tribute to maternal influence, he says:

"Its voice we hear—Oh, be it well obeyed !  
'Tis valor's impulse, and 'tis virtue's aid ;  
It prompts to all benevolence admires,  
To all that heavenly piety inspires,  
To all that praise repeats through lengthened years,  
That honor sanctifies, and time revere."

This holy agency, let us remember, is Christianity's child.

The Mohammedan has no refined and serious mother, deeply impressed with a sense of responsibility in guiding her son's youthful footsteps into the paths of peace and virtue ; the idolater finds her treated only as a mere bond-servant, whose duty it is to do the drudge-work of their miserable home.

No wonder then that women throng our temples ; for to Christianity they owe the possession of all that sweetens and dignifies life.

The creed of the idolater and the Mohammedan, besides, vitiates the taste, prevents enjoyment of the noble and beautiful, and represses literary and artistic attainment.

But for that religion which he professes to disbelieve, the modern infidel might have been bowing down to dumb idols, offering up human sacrifices and living like a beast of the forest, without a written language, a knowledge of science, or any of the higher characteristics of manhood.



Nor is its influence less conspicuous on the temporal condition than on the moral and intellectual condition of men.

*Socrates*, and the thinking spirits of Greece, delivered oracular sayings full of wisdom and truth, but they had no practical bearing on the evils of life.

It was reserved for the heralds of the gospel to announce a message which was, in very deed and truth, to be one of "peace on earth and good-will towards men."

The mythology of Athens may have charmed an imaginative people; but it left their evil passions unsubdued, and it entered no cottage to alleviate the sorrows and miseries of man.

There are signs of comfort, cheerfulness, and order, about the dwelling of the humblest Christian peasant, for which you only look in vain among a people devoted to strange gods.

One might suppose that a religion which teaches as a leading maxim, the *vanity* of temporal things, might make man indifferent to the interests of the life that now is; but this we find is very *far* from being the case.

Not only does it make life happier, and this earth more joyous and beautiful to us; but it also impels us to seek the present welfare of others.

*Milner*, in his Church History, writing of the eleventh century, says, "The true reliefs and mitigations of human misery lay entirely, at that time, in the influence of Christianity, and small as that

influence then was, the ferocity of the age was tempered by it ; and human life was thence prevented from being entirely degraded to a level with that of the beasts of the field that perish."

Even Gibbon, free-thinker as he was, thus expresses himself, " Yet truth and candor must acknowledge that the conversion of the North imparted many temporal benefits, both to the old and the new Christians.

The admission of the barbarians into the pale of civil and ecclesiastical society, delivered Europe from the depredations, by sea and land, of the Normans, the Hungarians, and the Russians, who learned to spare their brethren and cultivate their possessions."

The effect of Christianity on national stability and greatness is no less striking.

The motive principle of a nation must be a pure morality, based on the true religion, else it is founded on a shifting sand-bank, which may, at any moment, be engulfed by an unlooked for tempest.

The virtues of temperance, industry, self-denial, and active benevolence, are the pillars of a state ; and where are they so conspicuous as amongst Christians ?

A religious people can reform and at the same time preserve.

They know to obtain redress of grievances, without listening to sordid demagogues, and involving their country in all the horrors of anarchy.

Only think of what took place in France, during the denouncement of what Burke called "the conspiracy of Atheism, which will not leave to religion even a toleration, and make virtue herself less than a name."

With Rabelais began a series of brilliant though presumptuous and wicked men, who paved the way for a political revolution, attended with unparalleled horrors, and who warred against morality and religion.

"They made themselves a fearful monument !  
The wreck of old opinions—things which grew,  
Breathed from the breath of time ; the vail they rent,  
And what behind it lay, all earth shall view ;  
But good with ill they also overthrew,  
Leaving but ruins."

And how soon those puny mortals became *terrified* at the spectre whom they had evoked.

They had anew to proclaim, "the Eternal," lest the very frame-work of society should be destroyed.

The consequences of daring impiety were so frightful, that the hardiest skeptic hastened to alter his policy, and thereby, perhaps, Europe lost the sight of God, in His indignation destroying a second Sodom.

But a great experiment was tried, and a great lesson taught.

Infidelity had been spreading, and Christendom required to be warned how deadly was the sting of the serpent which it cherished in its bosom.

France had been the chief offender, and she awoke not from her day-dream of folly, till the streets of her capitol were drenched with the blood of her sons.

Is there any one who doubts that nations, like individuals, are indebted to Christianity for all that makes life enjoyable, prosperous, and secure?

A pure Christianity promotes self-respect and free inquiry; destroying the claims of a lordly priesthood, it asserts the rights of conscience, and to men who are accustomed to think for themselves, it secures independence of thought on all questions of political interest.

Our religion cultivates in men a feeling of individuality, and leads them to the conviction that governments were ordained for man, and not man for governments,—a conviction eminently favorable to freedom.

Our religion has had the happy effect of inducing governments to make provision for the relief of their unfortunate subjects; it has softened the inequality of rank, and mitigated the severity of caste.

Although war still exists, to the disgrace of human nature, yet it will be conceded by all that it is conducted on more humane principles than in former ages;—a change for which the world is indebted to the gospel.

Under the influence of our religion the pledge of one nation to another is more faithfully regarded than in times past; and in addition to this,

Christian nations do not give hostages to each other to insure the fulfillment of their treaties and engagements as do others.

Whatever benefits have been conferred on human society by legislation, or literature, or the arts and sciences, or other religions, or by all of these combined, and whatever progress they have made in the lapse of ages, the gospel as an instrument of benefit to man, has outstripped them all, and promises to keep in advance of them forever.

A religion may certainly produce such beneficent effects as to show that it has not been originated by man.

A holy religion, like that of Christ, has exerted so powerful and permanent an influence as to be in itself a proof of its Divine origin ; for it has had to contend at every step of its progress with the native depravity and the vices of mankind, and has propagated itself far and wide by means wholly pacific.

The moral effects of the Bible are in themselves a proof of its Divinity ; for nothing but divine power could have raised human society from the deep degradation into which it had sunk.

Christianity has promoted vastly the intellectual interests of mankind.

It has made a noble contribution to the literature of the world in its gift of a book of such acknowledged literary merits as the Holy Scriptures.

The Bible has furnished the foundation principles upon which have been based the noblest un-

inspired productions ; and it has given the keynote to our most sublime modern poets.

Dante and Milton drew their subjects from the Scriptures ; and without their influence no such works of literature as the " Divine Comedy " and " Paradise Lost " could ever have been produced.

The Scriptures contain truths of the very greatest breadth and magnitude—eminently adapted to expand the human intellect.

The grandest, noblest, and most inspired thought ever suggested to the mind of man is that of the Supreme Being, set forth in Revelation.

All the truths connected with the subject of redeeming grace, which are so fitted to break up the fountains of man's moral emotion, are also adapted to excite most intensely his intellectual powers.

Christianity has really promoted an improvement in the physical sciences and useful arts, by which fact it stands forth in the world to-day both as a proof and the means of intellectual progress.

The mind of Bacon, the father of inductive philosophy as a system, was moulded in part by the Christian religion.

His philosophy never prevailed, and probably never could have originated under any other religious system.

The Christian religion, by inspiring the learned with benevolence, has turned their attention to the physical sciences and useful arts, the study of which has contributed greatly to the relief of man's estate, and given vigor and strength to the intellect of the mass of men in Christian countries.

Knowledge is more generally diffused in Christian, than it is or ever has been in any other lands, and this we owe to the Bible.

It is a Christian duty to promote the intellectual elevation of the inferior orders of men.

Christianity makes the cultivation of man's understanding a moral duty, in the case of every man.

It induces the Christian to aim at the perfection of every part of his being, and to acquire all the facilities for doing good which literature, science, and a cultivated intellect afford him.

The Scriptures declare "that if the soul be without knowledge it is nōt good," and they represent the day of the church's moral perfection as an era in which "knowledge shall be increased."

In proof of the intellectual influence of the Bible we appeal to history.

Long before the Savior's personal appearance in the world—almost at the earliest period of human history—this influence began to be exerted ; for it is to be considered that heaven's earliest revelation to man, at first indeed enveloped in mist, was that of the incarnation of Christ.

About the time that Christianity arose, literature was on the wane ; and during the first four centuries of the Christian era, cultivated intellect was found almost exclusively in the Christian church.

Without the influence of the Christian fathers, during the period alluded to, the world would have sunk into mental chaos, and classic literature

would probably have been lost beyond the hope of recovery.

In the dark ages of Christendom the religion of the Bible kept alive the embers of learning, from which the intellect of the world has been rekindled.

Wherever the Bible has gone, literature has accompanied its march.

Not only did it inaugurate a new morality, and, in ten thousand different ways, elevate and embellish social life ; but it imparted a great impulse to mental improvement also, brought into active exercise faculties that had long lain dormant, gave vitality to reason and philosophic thought ; and by exciting hopes founded on immortality, at once dispelled the gloom in which futurity was involved to the heathen, and furnished fresh motives for exerting all the intellectual powers.

Russia owes her literary light to Christianity ; and vast and great has been the influence of the Bible on the intellectual condition of England, Scotland, France and America.

Mohammedanism has claimed to be a patron of literature and science ; and there was a time when the learning of the Arabians stood proudly conspicuous amidst surrounding darkness, and cultivated genius graced the halls of the Alhambra ; but the fact stares us in the face, that Islamism banished learning from the Greek Empire on its first subjugation.

Mohammedanism created warriors, but did not in the least assist the intellectual improvement.

For three centuries Christianity, literature, sci-



ence and general intelligence have been everywhere associated.

Glance over the nations that are unevangelical to-day, and we will find them all intellectually inferior and for the most part grossly ignorant ; having no literature, or at best one that is puerile and despicable, while the day-star of learning is rising even on the far distant evangelized isles of the ocean.

Wherever the gospel is made known, the mass of the people become intelligent, prosperous and happy.

It is lifting the whole world from low mental degradation into the regions of loftiest thought.

It is the benign influence of the Bible which diffuses the blessings of peace and comfort through the homes of Britain and America ; it makes even solitude pleasant, and sweetens the breath of society, enabling feeble minded mortals to triumph over every species of privation, suffering and toil.

Christianity alone can purify and elevate society.

It is the origin and the source of all sound morality and true civilization.

And if it were universally received and obeyed, wars and fightings would cease ; superstition, oppression, and every form of wickedness would come to an end, and virtue and happiness would reign throughout the world.

All men would then see and acknowledge that a religion which bore such desirable fruit, and which produced such great and good results, must have originated in God,

## THE AUTHENTICITY AND GENUINE- NESS OF THE SCRIPTURES.

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We are called upon to prove all things, and to be always ready to give to every man who asketh of us a reason for the hope that is in us ; and we cannot do this without at least a general knowledge of the evidences.

In these times of skepticism and caviling, it is especially important that this subject respecting the Scriptures should be widely known.

"Search the Scriptures" is a divine command given to all, and for the performance of this, as of other duties, every one must give an account for himself unto God.

One of the sins of infidels is their refusal to read the Scriptures in the light of those ancient times and distant lands when and where written.

Want of proper knowledge seriously interferes with our appreciation of a book ; and we need not say that our ability to appreciate the teachings of the Bible depends very much upon our degree of learning.

Men who do not know a single letter of the Greek or Hebrew alphabets will descant upon the merits of the English translation of the Bible.

Men who never saw a Biblical manuscript, nor

even a critical Greek Testament, will venture to harangue upon the purity of its text, and upon the subject of its various readings.

Those who never spent a day in fair and intelligent inquiry into any literary question connected with Scriptural criticism, will arrogate to themselves the function of deciding the weightiest matters that belong to the spiritual interests of mankind.

They will repeat all the objections to the Bible, which are to be found in infidel books, with an air of triumph; although it has been shown over and over again that many of these objections are founded on ignorance,—some in misconception and some in prejudice,—and these false statements and baseless assertions being always repeated with a view to mislead and to deceive.

We are continually called upon to show that what is assailed and rejected as Scripture teaching, is not the teaching of Scripture at all.

Hasty conclusions which result from ignorance or from superficial examination and prejudice, are among the most frequent of the reasons asserted for unbelief.

Men who have not a single qualification for criticism of the sacred text, are often the loudest and most zealous in their attempts to criticise.

We firmly hold that as a rule of faith and practice in life, the Bible is a safe and sufficient guide to every willing and enlightened mind.

With such a law to direct and regulate our con-

duct, we are not following "cunningly devised fables," but the sure testimonies of the Lord.

#### EVIDENCES OF THE AUTHENTICITY AND GENUINENESS OF THE BIBLE.

Among the opponents of revealed religion with whom we have to deal, objections to the authenticity and genuineness of the Bible, as urged by them, occupy a very prominent place.

*Have* the several books of Scripture been written at such times and places as have been commonly supposed, and are they the genuine productions of those men whose names they bear, and to whom they have been attributed, are the questions which men are inclined to ask, and while asking to doubt.

In attempting to make a reply to these men and their questions, it will be best to begin with an examination into the authenticity of the New Testament.

The best proof, perhaps, that the several books of the New Testament were written by the authors to whom they are ascribed, is found in contemporaneous history.

And by contemporaneous history, we mean the history written by those who lived at the time of the inspired authors, or immediately subsequent to that time.

It is certain from the account of these historians, both infidel and Christian, that the several books of the New Testament were then in existence, that they were the reputed writings of the authors

whose names they bear, and that these men were universally understood to be their authors.

It is a fact, agreed upon by the best judges of the Greek language, that the New Testament must have been written by *native Jews*, at the very time when it purports to have been written.

None but a Jew who had been brought up in Palestine could have written this dialect, nor could such Jews have written until about the time at which it purports to have been written ; because until about that time the native Jews of Palestine did not understand Greek.

Nor could it have been written in Hebraistic Greek by any generation subsequent to the Apostles, because after the destruction of Jerusalem the Hebraistic Greek ceased to be used.

Then again, their writings were of such a nature as would never have been unjustly claimed from ambitious motives by ambitious men.

Nor would they have been claimed for ambitious men by their friends.

The absence of all counter testimony in relation to the authenticity of the New Testament is a strong, and it would seem, conclusive evidence in support of its authenticity ; because it would appear utterly incredible that no evidence should exist of these books being written by other than their reputed authors, if it were indeed true.

Had it been possible, the Jews and jarring Christian sects would have impeached the authenticity of these books ; but the fact that they have

not, and especially that the Jews have not, who were highly interested to do so, and possessed every advantage for so doing were the thing possible in itself, amounts to a rational conclusion that these books are authentic.

It has always been admitted that the Epistles, and especially those of St. Paul, were actually written by the several authors to whom Christians attributed them.

But it is a very common thing with skeptics to attack the historical evidence for the four Gospels, and to say that we have no proof of their existence for several *years* after the time we claim them to have been written.

A story was perpetrated and became quite current to the effect that at the Nicene Council the true and false Gospels were placed under the communion-table in a church, and that the Bishops then present, besought the Lord that the inspired writings might appear on the table while the spurious ones should remain beneath, and that it so happened.

This fabulous tale was thrust into popularity by means of Hone's "Apocriphal New Testament."

This new edition was advertised as the "Forbidden Books of the original New Testament, being all the Gospels and Epistles suppressed by the Bishops of Rome, with proofs of their authenticity, by Archbishop Wake, etc."

The real title of the volume however, is different from the above ; being "The Suppressed Gospels

and Epistles of the Original New Testament of Jesus Christ, and other portions of the Holy Scriptures, now extant, attributed to His Apostles and their disciples, and venerated by the primitive Christian churches during the first four centuries ; but since, after violent disputations, forbidden by the Bishops of the Nicene Council, in the reign of the Emperor Constantine ; and omitted from the Catholic and Protestant editions of the New Testament, by its compilers.

Translated from the original tongues, with historical references to their authenticity, by Archbishop Wake and other learned divines."

Such a compound of wicked falsehood and ignorance as this title-page presents we have seldom seen, and yet the publisher boasts that the twenty-third thousand of his book is on sale.

As an evidence of its falsehood, to begin with, the books in question were *not* "venerated by the primitive Christian churches during the first four centuries," as stated by it.

Then again, the Nicene Council and the reign of Constantine did not fall within the period "since" the fourth century.

We have no historical proof whatever that the Nicene Council either forbade or authorized any books of Scripture ; and Archbishop Wake never defended the authenticity of what are properly called the Apocryphal Gospels and Epistles.

It is also a gross error to say that the volume to which we refer contains "all" the books of its

class ; so far is this from being the fact, that much larger collections have been published as we know, both in different countries and in modern times.

With respect to Archbishop Wake, the real truth is simply this ;—he published an English translation of the genuine Epistles of the Apostolic Fathers, Barnabas, Ignatius, Clement, Polycarp, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Martyrdoms of Ignatius and Polycarp.

It is reasonable to suppose that these were not *all* the books written by those whose names are here quoted, although in the case of some of them it may be true.

Yet this has nothing to do whatever with the canonical authority of their writings or their claims to inspiration.

We have been asked by infidels for the *testimony* that our four Gospels have existed ever since the first century, and that Christ's church never admitted more than four.

We reply that the witnesses to which we appeal for testimony to this fact constitute a body of proof which no candid person can refute.

It is well known that four Gospels, and *only* four, are admitted at present by all branches of the Christian church.

The chain of testimony in favor of these only, reaching back from our own day to that of more than fourteen hundred years ago, is so complete, that Robert Taylor, a well-known infidel, does not even *dare* to deny it, for, when speaking of the



skeptical *Faustus*, he says, "The objection of *Faustus* becomes from its own nature the most indubitable and unexceptionable evidence, carrying us up to the very early age, the fourth century, in which he wrote, with a demonstration that the Gospels were then universally known and received under the precise designation, and none other, than that with which they have come down to us, even as the Gospels respectively according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John."

Working our way backwards, we find eleven recorded lists of the New Testament books between the year 400 and the year 300.

Let us review these lists in the light of the historical testimony of that time.

*Cyril*, the patriarch of Jerusalem, who died in the year 386, says, "As to the New Testament, there are four Gospels, all the rest being false and pernicious."

Gregory of Nazianzus, who died in 389, says, "Matthew wrote for the Hebrews the wonders of Christ, Mark for Italy, Luke for Achaia, and John for all."

Philastrius, an Italian Bishop, places the Gospels at the head of the New Testament books.

Athanasius of Alexandria, who died in the year 373, speaks of the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Epiphanius, a learned man, who was more than a hundred years old when he died in the year 402, mentions the four holy Gospels.

We may also mention Jerome, who was born about the year 340.

He gives more than one list, it is true, but always includes exactly four Gospels.

Rufinus, of Aquileia, lived at the same time as Jerome, and says, that "In the New Testament are the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, etc.

Augustin of Hippo, in Africa, was born in the year 355, and gives us lists of the Gospels, which he says are four, "according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The Council of Laodicea, about the year 364, has a list of the Scriptures attached to its canons, in which are mentioned "four gospels, according to Matthew, according to Mark, according to Luke, according to John."

The Council of Carthage, in 397, is said to have drawn up a list in which we find its canons or decisions.

This list mentions "the Gospels, *four* books."

Besides the foregoing testimonies, which are mentioned by Dr. Gausseu in his work on the Canon, there are quite a number of others which have been mostly collected by Dr. Lardner, in his great and irrefutable work on the credibility of the Gospel history.

The proof thus supplied is so abundant that we cannot even pretend to condense it.

It is in its character such as might be drawn from the religious literature of our own day.

There are innumerable quotations from the Gospels, and references to them, and based upon the assumption that the four evangelical narratives were everywhere received as true and Divine authority; and amid the vast mass of allusion and citation there is no single *trace* of the acceptance of any of the false gospels, by the orthodox churches.

The very enemies of the Gospel themselves do not appear to have even ventured to *insinuate* that the Christian world was in error on this point.

The Emperor Julian, in his defense of paganism, displays great skill, learning and animosity, but he appeals to the very Gospels which we accept.

However earnestly he may deny their credibility, and their divine origin, yet he does not even seem to have ever *dreamed* that there was any doubt as to which were the Christian Gospels.

He mentions John, Matthew, Luke, and Mark by name, some of them frequently, and all of them in a single sentence.

The conclusion is obvious; if he had known more Evangelists than four, he would evidently have named them; and if there had been any doubt even respecting the genuineness of our four Gospels, he would doubtless have expressed it.

He died a violent death on June 26, 363; and notwithstanding his hostility to Christianity, or rather in consequence of it, he must be regarded as one of our most important witnesses for the genuineness of the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles of St. Paul.

Let us bear in mind too that there was no greater space of time between the Emperor Julian and our Lord's public ministry than there is between us and the suppression of English monasteries by Henry VIII.

The rise of Christianity and its progress during these three centuries referred to, were too well known for him to deny them ; and so he labored only to discredit and depreciate what he dared not dispute as a fact.

In illustration of this we will quote one of his sentences, in which he says, " But Jesus, having persuaded a few among you, and those the most worthless of men, has now been celebrated about three hundred years, having done nothing in His lifetime worthy of remembrance, unless any one thinks it a mighty matter to heal the lame and the blind, and to exorcise demoniacs in the villages of Bethsaida and Bethany."

The admissions made in this passage are exceedingly valuable, and so are those implied in the sentence where he mentions all the four Evangelists, saying, " Neither Paul, nor Matthew, nor Mark, nor Luke, ventured to say that Jesus was God ; but the good John, perceiving a great multitude already taken with this disease in many of the Greek and Italian cities, and hearing, I fancy, that the tombs of Peter and Paul were secretly venerated, but yet hearing that they were venerated, first dared to say it."

Whatever may be thought of Julian's fancies,

the facts stated remain the same and unquestionable.

Julian admits the genuineness and authenticity of most of the books of the New Testament, that those books contain the doctrine of Christ's Apostles, that the Gospel spread far and wide with extraordinary rapidity to many Greek and Italian cities, in John's lifetime.

That St. John's gospel was written after the other three, and after the death of Paul and Peter, and that Christ is expressly called God in John's gospel, is the testimony of Julian.

Celsus, Porphyry, Julian and others acknowledge the existence and truth of the Christian Bible, referring to its writings and quoting them often for the purpose of controversy and ridicule.

Celsus, one of the bitterest enemies of Christianity, speaks of the founder of the Christian religion, as having lived but a very few years before his time, and mentions the principal facts of the gospel history relative to Jesus Christ, declaring that he had copied the account from the writings of the Evangelists.

He quotes books and makes extracts from them as being composed by the disciples and companions of Jesus, and under the names they now bear.

Lucian, the contemporary of Celsus, was another avowed enemy of the Christians; and yet he bears authentic testimony to the chief facts and fundamental truth of Christianity; that its founder was crucified in Palestine, and worshipped by the

Christians, who cherished strong hopes of eternal life through Him.

The evidence supplied by the records of the great and protracted persecution under Diocletian, brings us to the same result respecting the number of the Gospels then recognized by the church.

But it is unnecessary for us to go further into details furnished by the fourth century, hence we will proceed to briefly mention some of the witnesses of the third century, or from the year 200 to the year 300.

During this century we have a succession of Christian writers who treat of a great many different subjects, and introduce into their works thousands of quotations from the four Gospels, or references to them.

It is very evident that we may learn from such quotations and allusions what Gospels they received as authentic.

Proceeding on this principle, we are enabled to point out the passages of the Gospels which are indicated more or less distinctly in the works of various Christian writers.

Origen, in speaking of the Gospels, says that he knew of only four, and these he particularly specifies as those of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

He seems to be well aware of the existence of false gospels, and he knew that some of these were accepted by certain heretical sects.

When discoursing upon the introduction of

Luke, he observes that the Evangelist's expression "taking in hand," contains a tacit accusation of those who, without the gift of the Holy Spirit, took it upon themselves to write gospels; "for Matthew, and Mark, and John, and Luke did not "take in hand" to write, but being full of the Holy Ghost, wrote Gospels. . . . He adds that "the churches have four Gospels, heretics have very many; of which one is entitled "according to the Egyptians," another "according to the twelve Apostles."

Basilus likewise had the assurance to write a gospel and call it by his own name.

Many "took in hand" to write, many also took in hand to set in order.

Four Gospels only have been approved, out of which the doctrines of our Lord and Savior are to be learned," etc.

Origen was one of the greatest writers and most learned scholars of his time.

It is supposed that he was born about the year 184 after the birth of Christ, so that there was only about ninety years between him and the Apostle John.

Gregory of Neocesarea, Dionysius of Alexandria, Cyprian of Carthage and Novatus, all speak of four Gospels.

Dionysius of Rome, mentions the Old and New Testaments in general, and cites St. John's Gospel in particular.

Lucian of Antioch, published an edition of the

Old and New Testament about the year 290 ; and another edition is ascribed to Hesychius about the same time.

To this period also belongs the celebrated Martyr Pamphilus of Cesarea, a diligent collector and student of Holy Scripture.

The index to De Lagarde's edition of the Greek fragments of Hyppolytus in the year 220, shows seventy-four references to Matthew and Mark, twenty-two to Luke, and thirty-eight to John ; that is to say, one hundred and thirty-four in all, in two hundred and eight octavo pages.

But we shall seek in vain for any references to the *false* gospels in those pages.

Continuing our citation of historical proofs, let us now turn to the second century.

Doubtless many of the writers of this period are altogether unknown, while some are known by name only.

Most of their writings it is true exist in simple fragments, and only a few are in a measure complete.

But from these we have the most satisfactory and decisive evidence that the four Gospels only were accepted by the church then which we now possess.

The truth of this is most clearly verified by reference to the testimony left upon record by the following writers :

*Barnabas*, who was associated with Paul, in an Epistle to the Churches, quotes the Gospel of Matthew as of divine authority.



*Ignatius*, in 107 A. D., without naming the Gospels, has left in his writings references to Matthew, Luke, Mark, John, and the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians.

*Polycarp*, in 108 A. D., furnishes us in a book written by him, more than forty undoubted allusions to the different books of the New Testament.

*Papius*, in 115, mentions the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, and speaks of John.

*Hermas*, who wrote about the year 140, does not expressly name *any* of the Gospels; but he has a number of passages which prove that he was very familiar with all four of them.

*Justin Martyr*, in the year 140, quotes from and refers to all the Gospels, some of the them over and over again.

*Tatian*, in the year 170, compiled a harmony of the four Gospels.

*Melito of Sardis*, in 177, gives references to many facts recorded in the Gospels, and besides these alludes to John in particular.

*Ireneus of Lyons*, in 178, mentions the Gospels in the very same order which we now have them, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

In addition to this, he endeavors to show why there *must* be four Gospels, neither more nor less.

The testimony of such a man as this on the point in question, can scarcely be overestimated by us.

He wrote an account of the various heresies which prevailed in his day, and sets forth the principles of the true faith.

That he was a man of most extensive information, and therefore competent to do so cannot be denied.

Says in regard to the Gospels, their certainty was so patent, that even the very heretics themselves bore witness to them, and tried to prove their own doctrines true from them.

The Ebionites used that of Matthew only.

Marcion retained a part of Luke ; while the Cerinthians preferred Mark, and the Valentinians availed themselves of John as their authority.

Clement of Alexandria, a man of great learning, mentions and accepts all four Gospels, and not only has sundry quotations from Matthew and Luke, but from the Epistles of Paul to the Romans, 1 Corinthians, and the Hebrews.

Tertullian, in 192, made free use of *all* the Gospels in his writings, and gives them the same names by which they are now known, and that repeatedly.

Besides the names already quoted, there are many more whose testimony we must omit for want of space, as we cannot produce here all the evidence that might be given.

But in closing this subject, we must at least specify a few facts, although of a different character, yet very important.

And the *first* of these is, that *translations* of the New Testament were made as early as the second century.

Two such at least are still known ; the one a

Syriac, called the Peshito, and the other a Latin, called the Ibala.

Both of these contain our four Gospels, and these only.

The best and latest authorities assign the old Latin version to about the middle, or not later than the end of the second century.

Wescott fixes the date of that translation to the year 180, A. D.

Bleek, Tregelles, Scrivener and Sanday, all assign it to the middle of the second century.

Roesch holds that it *could* not have been made later than 200 A. D.

A *second* fact is, that a list of the books of the New Testament, known as the Muratorian Canon, and supposed by the most eminent New Testament scholars in America, England and Germany, to have been written in the last quarter of the second century, contains the four Gospels.

Tischendorf with others, places the date of this list at about 170—180 A. D.

*Thirdly*, it is an established fact that during the second century various Apocryphal and spurious books were written, bearing the names of Apostles and Apostolic men.

These works, so far as we know them, draw very largely upon the genuine books of the New Testament for their matter, and therefore may justly be appealed to as witnesses in their favor.

The false gospels which sprung up at that time borrowed many of their ideas and facts from the

true gospels, in imitation of which some of them at least were most certainly written.

In the next place, the wildest and most anti-scriptural heretics of the second century availed themselves of the true Gospels.

How they did this we have already seen explained by Ireneus, and what he says is confirmed by later writers.

We know from history that these heretics began to make their appearance during the lifetime of the Apostles, and some of them were as much opposed as the heathens to the simplicity and purity of the Gospels.

And yet we find them claiming one and another of these Gospels as the foundation of their various systems.

This implies that the Gospels already existed, and were known when these heresies sprang up ; so that their existence even from Apostolic times proves the existence of the Gospels at that early date.

The last fact we will here mention is, that the frequent allusions to Christ, to Christians, and to Christianity by heathen writers of the second century are to some extent an argument for the genuineness of the Gospels.

Those referred to by Dr. Lardner in the second century, begin with Tacitus, the Roman historian, who was born about the beginning of Nero's reign, A. D. 54.

He speaks of Christ as being put to death in

Judea, during the reign of Tiberius, by the procurator Pontius Pilate, and of His followers becoming exceedingly numerous after His death, not only in Judea, but in Rome.

*Pliny* the younger, A. D. 107, describes the practices of the Christians in Bithynia, and their sufferings by persecution.

Pliny was at this time governor of Bithynia, and such multitudes of Christians were brought before him for trial and punishment, that he knew not what to do with them, and wrote to the Emperor for advice.

In his letter he describes the religion of the Christians, their meetings, their sacraments, their mode of worship, and bears testimony to their holy and blameless lives.

He speaks of having put two Christian females to the torture, "but nothing," says he, "could I collect from them, except a depraved and excessive superstition."

The authorities for the first century are necessarily few.

The New Testament was not all written until near its close, and therefore was not everywhere known.

Clement of Rome, A. D. 96, quotes from Matthew and Luke, if not from Mark.

Josephus, the Jewish historian, does not mention the Gospels, but he speaks of Christ, saying, "About this time lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed we may call Him a man, for He performed

marvelous things. He was an instructor of such as embraced the truth with pleasure.

And when Pilate on accusation of the chief men among us, condemned Him to the cross, those who before entertained a respect for him, continued to do so, for He appeared to them again on the third day; the divine prophets having declared these and many other wonderful thing concerning Him."

In the above passage, Josephus, a professed and an earnest believer in the Jews' religion, testifies that Jesus lived at that very time assigned to Him by the sacred writers, that He was a wise and a wonderful man, that he performed many miracles, had many followers, was crucified under Pilate, had rose from the dead according to the predictions of the prophets, and that the sect of Christians, so named from Him, remained long after their Master was taken away from them.

From the whole of the facts with which we are familiar, we are justified in asserting that the four Gospels can be traced back to about the year 100 after the birth of Christ, and some of them even to an earlier date.

And certainly this is enough to answer our purpose and prove our position respecting their origin and genuineness.

At the time above referred to, there were many living who had both seen and heard the Apostles, and who were in a position therefore to know whether the Gospels were genuine productions or mere legends.

If these venerable documents had first appeared a hundred years later, objectors might have had more to say, but as the matter stands, it is most absurd to question their genuineness.

We have got far more evidence in their favor than we have for the greater part of those books which were written by Greek and Latin classical authors.

Before the middle of the second century we find the four Gospels recognized everywhere as embodying a true account of the life and doctrines of Christ.

If they had been forgeries, it is impossible to see how they could have attained such a position of authority and reverence.

Christianity was everywhere exposed to opposition, and had its very Gospels, containing its principles, been spurious, then its enemies would doubtless have discovered and proclaimed the fact.

The silence of its enemies on this point demonstrates that no such fraud was either known or suspected.

And hence all the endeavors of modern skeptics to undermine our faith in the genuineness and integrity of the Gospels have utterly and ingloriously failed.

Not only so, but they are *themselves* now beginning to admit that the Gospels were substantially written during the first century.

So far this is a triumph for truth ; but, to weaken

the force of such an admission, it has been insinuated that at the outset other gospels were received by the church, and that Christianity was built up by means of true and false gospels alike.

It may be necessary to examine this allegation ; but in the mean time we affirm *first*, that there is no evidence of the false gospels ever having been received by the church ; *secondly*, that the spurious gospels which we now have are of such a character as to preclude the possibility of their having been written so early as the four true ones ; and *thirdly*, that the false gospels differ so much in many respects from the true ones, that the church could not have believed and propagated both. Modern infidels are very persevering in their endeavors to undermine men's faith.

Knowing as they do the immense importance of the four Gospels, they have sought to persuade us that they were not written until long after the Apostolic age.

Failing in this, they have tried to make us believe that the original Gospels were previously corrupted in latter times.

In this they have also signally failed.

And so now they tell us that the early church received as Divine, a number of gospels which were afterwards rejected.

But this, as we have already shown, was absurd and false.

The spurious gospels contain much that is not only preposterous, but contradictory to each other ;



and some of them are so much changed that we do not know their original form.

The Apocryphal and spurious books, which are commonly called the New Testament Apocrypha, are of several kinds ; they are false gospels, false Acts of the Apostles, false Epistles, false Revelations, &c.

But we shall call attention here only to the false gospels.

The production of unauthorized and erroneous gospels began very early, as we know from the fact that St. Luke clearly refers to such, when he says, " Forasmuch as *many* have taken in hand to set forth, &c."

These earliest false gospels seem to have utterly perished, and we do not so much as know their names.

In the course of time however, others were written, especially in the second, third and following centuries.

Their authors appear to have been of two kinds; the one class wrote what they regarded as useful stories, partly their own invention, and partly based on idle legends ; nor does it by any means follow that they expected or even desired that their books should be received as inspired.

But there were others who invented false histories for the purpose of propagating unscriptural heresies.

There is little or no trace of the reception of these false gospels however, except by the most heretical sects.

This brings us back to our first proposition :

*That the false gospels were not received by the early Church as Canonical books.*

Upon this point we shall quote the testimony of Jeremiah Jones, where he says of the so-called New Testament Apocrypha as a whole, that "No Christian writer hath appealed to, or made use of any of the last Apocryphal books of the New Testament as of authority."

And again he says, "I assent, then (1), that for the most part, the Apocryphal books mentioned are expressly, and in so many words rejected by those who have mentioned them, as the forgeries of heretics, and so as spurious and Apocryphal."

This I assent (upon the closest and most impartial inquiry into all the places of their writings where any of them are named), to be true as to almost every individual book."

He farther observes (2), that when any of these books is cited, or seems to be appealed to by any Christian writer, though not expressly and in so many words rejected by him, there are other sufficient argument to prove that he did not esteem it canonical.

He says (3), that sometimes the fathers made use of the Apocryphal books to show their learning, or that the heretics might not charge them with partiality and ignorance."

These and similar statements are established by Mr. Jones in a careful examination of all the pas-

sages in the writings of the fathers relating to sixty-nine of the Apocryphal books.

With regard to Apocryphal gospels and other books which are still extant, this author pursues a similar course.

His demonstration is complete, showing that not one of the false gospels were received as canonical by the Church of Christ.

Dr. Lardner when speaking of the so-called Epistle of Barnabas, says, "I do not in this epistle perceive any quotations or references to any of the Apocryphal gospels."

And again, of the Epistle of Clement, he says, "I have not perceived in it any quotations or references to any of the Apocryphal gospels, as they are called."

He notices a like absence of allusions to Apocryphal gospels in the writings of *Hermas*, *Ignatius*, and *Polycarp*.

Ireneus mentions some of them, but never quotes them, and the same may be said of Tertullian, who refers to a book called the "Acts of Paul and Thecla," but he does so only to condemn it.

Clement of Alexandria, and Origen have mentioned and quoted several such books, but never as of authority, and sometimes with expressions of marked dislike.

Eusebius quotes no such books ; and although he mentions them, it is not by way of approbation, but to show that they were recognized as of little

or no authority, and were never received by sound Christians.

Athanasius mentions none of them by name, and only passes a severe censure upon them in general.

They never came under the notice of Jerome, but he gives evidence of his displeasure at their pretended claims.

It is a simple fact that no orthodox writer of the first four hundred years can be found quoting or referring to the Apocryphal gospels as of any authority in the church.

One writer declares that "not one of the spurious gospels was ever considered as having any claim to the faith of the church.

Nothing but gross ignorance or willful misrepresentation can speak of the false and spurious gospels as having occupied for a moment the same position in the church, and as having been subsequently separated by ecclesiastical authority.

If any of the spurious gospels were ever received, it was by individuals who knew no better, and by sects of heretics."

We fully subscribe to these statements, all of which can be substantiated by an appeal to the literature of the early church, still available to every one who may wish to read and know for himself.

Those who affirm the contrary not only are unable to quote a single ancient authority for what they say, but flatly contradict all that the genuine

writers of the early church have left us on the subject.

We may now pass to our second proposition, viz: *That the false gospels now extant are not so ancient as the true ones.*

This is proven by several considerations.

With the single exception of an allusion found in Luke 1 : 1, no Apocryphal gospel of any kind is quoted or referred to by any Christian writer prior to the year 175 after Christ.

All attempts to find such reference at an earlier date have been fruitless.

The most plausible evidence we call to mind is that given by Justin Martyr, A. D. 140, who says that "Christ was born in a cave," a statement also found in one the false gospels.

But inasmuch as Justin gives no authority for his assertion, we may as well believe that the writer of the false gospel took the statement from him, as he from the gospel, or that both of them received it from some common tradition.

From fifty to ninety years after Justin such allusions became more frequent; but it is not until the fourth century that they can be said to become numerous.

Some of the spurious books are traceable to these as their source, and it is demonstrable that they were forged for the use of heretical sects.

A most potent argument against the false gospels being so ancient as the true ones, is based upon their internal structure and character.

It must have taken a long *time* for inventive genius and heresy to originate and produce the many obviously absurd legends of these forged books.

Men do not pass at a bound from the simplicity of pure historical facts to the complicated structure of legendary and fabulous composition.

Besides, there is so much in these forgeries which is notoriously false, that they must have been written very far from the time and place in which the events they record should have occurred.

Some of them were not, and could not have been written, until several hundred years after Christ, when men had departed from their first love and the purity of the evangelical faith.

Thus while heresy gave birth to some, superstition was the parent of others. Our next proposition is, *that the false gospels are inconsistent with the true ones.*

Many things in them are imputed to the Apostles which they neither said nor did ; the history of them as thus related in those gospels and Acts being false, fictitious and romantic.

They pretend to give us an account of things upon which the Gospels are absolutely silent, and upon which all the early Christian writers are equally silent.

They also pretend to give us an account of matters which are only touched upon in the Scriptures, and which are not mentioned in more detail by any Christian writers.

They abound likewise in absurd and ridiculous stories, which cannot be true ; while the miracles or marvels which they record are frequently not only incredible, but also dishonoring to the pure and lofty character of Christ, to whom they are imputed.

It is almost superfluous therefore, to say, that such silly and preposterous inventions as these books are, cannot possibly be consistent with the straight forward dignified tone of the true Evangelists.

And not only are the false gospels often contradictory to the true ones, absurd and puerile in themselves, but weaken their claims by contradicting each other.

In consequence of these discrepancies, the heretical sects who accepted one or two of the spurious gospels were led to reject others.

It is, moreover, very important to observe, as before indicated, that some of these forgeries have been so altered that we do not know their original form.

In modern collections of those which are now extant, some of them appear in two or three different forms.

Now, if they had been accounted sacred and inspired, they would not have been trifled with in this way ; but would have been as carefully copied and preserved as the four true Gospels.

One of the most famous of these forged gospels on record appears to have been based upon that of

St. Matthew ; but it differs very widely from it in many respects, and is known under four or five different names.

Why all this uncertainty and alteration, if not because men felt no real reverence for the books with which they thus trifled ?

And yet some modern objectors to the truth would have us believe that the early Christians venerated the Apocryphal gospels as much as they did the true ones.

They have the assurance to say also that the early church quoted them all as of equal authority.

They are audacious enough to affirm that the church was founded as much upon the false gospels, as upon those of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The real *fact* however, is, that a thousand quotations from the true Gospels may be found in the writings of the early church for every one of the false gospels, thus showing very clearly which had the preponderance in moulding their thought and doctrines of belief.

The undoubted testimony of all true history proves that the false gospels were never received by the church, and that the four true gospels alone were accepted, and *always* recognized as canonical.

And these four true Gospels, in their authorship, design, and subject matter, represent the various races, temperaments and classes of men ; and hence the four Gospels.



In Matthew, we have the Jew, who wrote for the Jews, and possibly in his earliest sketch of the discourses of Christ, wrote in the Jewish language; but if so, he must have translated, at a later period, his own Gospel into Greek. This very fact goes far to illustrate the specific design of the Gospel of Matthew.

It is the Gospel for the Jews, and so the Gospel in relation to the past; it is likewise the Gospel of the Messiah in His relation to the Jews.

That it is the Gospel to the Jews, appears from the opening words of its introduction, in which he says, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham;" the son of David, and therefore the heir to the Jewish kingdom; the son of Abraham, and therefore the heir to the Jewish promise.

That it is the Gospel in relation to the past appears from the constantly recurring formula, "that it might be fulfilled"—words which occur on nearly every page of the book.

The gospel of Matthew contains no less than sixty-five quotations from the Old Testament; nearly three times as many as there are in any one of the other Gospels.

In the five incidents of the infancy of Jesus, contained in the first two chapters, the Evangelist sees the fulfillment of five ancient prophecies.

This Gospel is also didactic, being marked by five continuous discourses,—the sermon on the mount, the address to the Apostles, the parables

of the kingdom of heaven, the discourses on the church, and on the judgment—these discourses all dwelling on the work of the Messiah, the Messiah of the ancient people, as Lawgiver, as Judge, and as King.

The Gospel of St. Matthew was, then, as it has been called, the ultimatum of Jehovah to His ancient people.

St. Mark, on the other hand, is the representative of the Roman—the man of power.

This is the Gospel of the present, the Gospel for the Romans, the Gospel of Jesus as the Lord of the world, the Gospel that strives to show to the Roman that Christ is able to take the kingdom.

It is the Gospel of private life, or the book of incidents ; it is the book of Apostolic memoirs ; it is marked by the graphic vividness which reflects the memory of an eye-witness, the Gospel which, apart from any special reference to theology or to prophecy, brings out the idea of our Lord's deeds as He lived and moved among men.

St. Luke wrote in Greece, and for the intelligent, philosophic, and affable Grecian people.

The Greek above all others of that day, was the man of reason ; and Christ must be shown to him as perfect, a divine man, and in such a way as to commend His claims to their reason.

St. Luke's Gospel is in its language the most concise, in its order of presentation the most historical and artistic.

The book was immediately addressed to the "most excellent Theophilus."

Who this man was, we are left to our own conjecture, or that of others.

He bore the Greek name, and we would say, at first thought, that he was probably some honored and esteemed Greek with whom the Evangelist had more or less intimate relation.

It is more than likely however, that he was only a representative man of a large class to whom the Gospel had been preached.

Theophilus means a lover of God, and may stand as a representative of *all* those who honored and revered Him.

That this *was* really the case is established by the most general and trustworthy tradition, as recorded by the early Christian Fathers.

We learn from the Scriptures that Antioch became the great centre of Gentile Christianity, and from it Paul and Luke preached the Gospel to the Gentile world.

From the traditions of ancient authorities we learn that Luke recorded in a book the Gospel preached by Paul for the benefit of the Gentiles, particularly of those who inhabited Greece.

Ireneus, Eusebius, Jerome, Origen, and others of the fathers agree in making this statement.

It appears that the design of this Gospel was to give an orderly and connected account of the great facts accepted among the early Christians, and based upon the testimony of eye-witnesses, concerning Jesus of Nazareth and his Gospel.

But there was beyond this a practical object in

commending Jesus of Nazareth to the Grecian world, not as the Jewish Messiah, or the universal Lord, but as the Divine Deliverer, the Savior of sinners, for whom all the world was waiting.

It is a Gospel not national but universal in its application, not regal, but human in its compass, a Gospel cleansed from the leprosy of castes and freed from the blindness of all earthly limitations.

It is the Gospel for sinners, for Samaritans, for the Gentiles, for mankind.

A Gospel for the Greek must be so far a Gospel for the world.

But the Greek was more clearly the man of humanity from the fact that he worshipped man in all his gods.

His religion was the highest form of idolatry, the most attractive of the polytheisms.

The Hindoo asks men to worship monstrous emblems of physical power ; the Egyptian, life in all its forms ; the Roman, Rome and the Emperor ; but the Greek was broader than all these, his idea nobler.

To him, humanity seemed most divine ; diviner than all physical forces, life or empires ; he recognized man himself as being diviner than all his works and all the world.

The man on earth with the grandest power of thought and beauty of action was the ideal man of the Greek, and approached nearest the place to be occupied by a God.

The Greek, instead of seeing our God every-

where and in everything, speaking through the truth, manifesting Himself in the beauty of the heavens, and in the glory of His handiwork, and in the giving of fruitfulness to the earth for His creatures, he saw only man imaged there.

To him it was man's universe, and not Jehovah's.

The Greek seemed to humanize the clouds, the forests, the rivers and the seas, peopling them with deities or semi-deities, with satyrs and fauns, nymphs and muses, each of which represented some side of man's nature.

All these, according to his idea, were intellectual but unspiritual.

The Greek thought and culture had been given to mankind four centuries before Luke sent out his Gospel to the world.

It had done its best in bringing mankind together, but nevertheless decay and corruption were everywhere manifest.

Utter wretchedness and perpetual unrest had taken possession of the great and pure minds, and the undefined longing for some divine man was verging toward despair when the gospel went forth from Antioch by Paul and Luke, for the generation of the Grecian world.

It thus becomes apparent that the Greek was an altogether peculiar man, in a peculiar situation and needing a peculiar gospel presentation.

To meet this want with a suitable presentation of the Gospel, Luke was chosen.

He was born in Antioch, a physician by profes-

sion, a Greek in soul and culture, and thus thoroughly acquainted with the Greek world and its peculiar wants.

It was for this reason, no doubt, that he was afterwards intimately associated with Paul in his great work for the Gentile world.

Luke's Gospel, according to the testimony of the early church, was moulded and inspired by Paul, who combined the grand religious soul of the Jew with the culture of the Greek.

In all the early church no other men could have been found equal to them in their fitness for reaching and influencing that Greek world by the Gospel.

We find in Luke the man of classical culture, moulded by Paul the mighty thinker and genius of that age.

And so these two went forth together to the conflict, the hearts of both throbbing with a sympathy and love which reached out beyond the Jew to all mankind.

By such culture and work, such companionship and inspiration, Luke was eminently fitted to trace the life of Christ in its wide comprehensiveness, as the offering of God for the nations, full of hope and mercy, and assured to the whole world by the love of a suffering Savior.

As a physician, in an age when the physician was so cherished a counselor and friend, he was fitted to sympathize with man.

The Holy Ghost chose and prepared Luke with Paul for the work.

The Gospel of Luke is eminently Greek from its point of view and general subject.

Matthew in his opening, gives a clue to his whole gospel, so Mark, and so John.

They differ as much from each other as Jew, Roman and Christian. The same is true in reference to the introduction of Luke.

Its characteristic is a declaration of the Evangelist's purpose to give a systematic presentation of the facts of our Lord's life as they occurred.

Its declarations of the blessedness of faith and the exaltation of the lowly, show at once how he is to contemplate the life of Him who was to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

The perfect manhood of the Savior, and the consequent mercy and universality of His covenant, is his central theme, rather than the relations of His kingdom, as in Matthew ; or its power, as in Mark ; or its eternal basis, as in John.

In the other Gospels we have our King, Lord, and God ; here the image of our Great High Priest, made perfect through sufferings, tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.

We have here the man Christ Jesus in His complete humanity.

Every stage in the development of the veritable humanity of Christ is recorded in this Gospel with the utmost particularity.

It is this Gospel, more than all others, that has given birth to the great modern reformatory move-

ments, the care for the poor, and insane, and deaf, and blind, which distinguish modern Christendom.

Well then might it be called the Gospel of the poor, despised and outcasts of the world.

For Luke evidently gives us the Gospel for the universal man, and not for Jew, Roman, or Christian alone.

This appears most clearly to be its object not only from what has been already said, but from its being sent out everywhere as "a light to lighten the Gentiles," proclaiming peace and good will toward men, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in Christ's name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Here, the genealogy, in contrast with that of Matthew—which traces the line of the Messiah from Abraham and David by the royal line of Solomon, through Joseph—follows the pedigree up through Mary and Nathan to David, and *thus* on back to Adam, the father of all the race, "which was the son of God."

In the latter part of this Gospel we find all those gracious parables no where else recorded, which present the fullness and freeness of God's love to all the suffering and sorrowing world, and which have always been esteemed as the choicest treasure of nations.

Here alone, we find the sending out of the seventy to the heathen world beyond the Jordan, and our Lord's ministry in that region of Perea.

Here then we have a Gospel, which as we have



before said, may truly be called the Gospel of universal humanity.

But this universal man of his Gospel, and brother of all human kind, is at the same time God as well.

In Him therefore we find the very Savior most suited to the Greek.

He wanted some living image of God presented in a truly perfect man.

He had long sought for it in his poor blind way, but the end of all his research resulted only in the erection of an altar "to the unknown God."

He wanted humanity in its perfection and glory; and asked for a God who should be son of man.

Luke satisfies that desire in presenting Jesus Christ as God clothed in human form.

Through that heart of wondrous love, matchless intellect, and marvelous beauty of character, God Himself shone.

In His purity of thought and sympathy, and in His life of active benevolence God Himself lived and wrought.

He was all human, the great and perfect Brother of mankind, and yet all divine, the great and perfect God from heaven.

This presentation of Him served to correct the false Greek idea of God, and of the social relations; exalting and purifying the one, and eliminating the principle of worldliness out of the other, by revealing a new principle and law of spiritual life.

As a result, it swept away all the gods of Greece, and introduced in their stead the One only true and living God.

From the angelic visions with which it opens, to that of its closing chapter, we find the Gospel of Luke full of glimpses into the angelic and spirit world.

It contains more of this element than all the rest of the Bible ; and thus fulfills its special mission in satisfying the desire of the soul respecting the future world.

The Greek, the world, man, needed instruction, *first*, concerning man's sin, and God's righteousness ; *second*, concerning the origin of evil ; and *third*, concerning the state of the disembodied spirit. The Greek needed instruction on the subject of prayer.

The Jews had their synagogues in which they observed the forms of prayer three times a week.

But the Greek had no prayer, no hymns nor forms of sacred worship of any kind.

All this had to be taught him ; and the Holy Ghost did it through the instrumentality of the Gospel by Luke.

He presents Christ as an example in prayer under all the varied circumstances of life.

He prays at His baptism.

Being led into the wilderness He prays before the temptation.

He prays in the mount, and is transfigured.

He prays during His agony in the garden, and

is strengthened by the angels who minister unto Him.

The prayer offered up for His murderers, and the last prayer in behalf of Himself on the cross, are given by Luke alone.

The efficacy of importunate prayer is illustrated by two parables—the friend at midnight, and the poor widow.

He teaches how to pray by the contrast of the two who went up into the temple, the one a Pharisee and the other a publican; and also in the Lord's prayer so familiar to us

He likewise unfolds the duty and blessedness of thanksgiving in prayer.

He gives more concerning the duty and character of prayer than all the other Evangelists together.

If in this matter God takes so much pains to show how He may be approached, and by what means He will graciously condescend to satisfy the varied wants of men, with what eagerness then should we study His word in order to secure His favor in answer to our heart's desires?

After what has been thus far said, one might think that the three Gospels referred to had exhausted all the possible aspects of our Lord's life and teaching.

If it be asked what still remains? we answer, one infinite thing, that which links us to eternity, and in so doing satisfies the longing desires of the immortal soul.

St. John places the cap-stone into the rising arch of Christian revelation by which we ascend into heaven, when he represents Christ as the incarnate Word, the pre-existent and eternal Logos who came down from heaven to save and sanctify the world by becoming the spiritual light and life of men.

Whether so designed by the writer or not, yet this Gospel is, in fact, a supplement to the other three.

In all probability John was acquainted with most of the other books of the New Testament, for their authority seems to have been established soon after his death.

John stands alone as the ideal and spiritual Evangelist, who introduces us into the Holy of holies.

His Gospel is the purest, the deepest, the sublimest of all literary compositions, the Gospel of gospels, the one truly tender Gospel which touches the very heart of Christ and reveals His great love for the world.

It is pre-eminently therefore, the Gospel for the church, the *spiritual* Gospel, the Gospel of *eternity*, the Gospel of Christ as the eternal Son of God and the Word Incarnate.

Thus taken together, the four Gospels show us what Christ was, what He became for us, and what He meant that we should be in and through Him here and hereafter.

These Gospels bear the marks of their respec-

tive authors, and are substantiated by a great mass of convincing historical evidences to their authenticity and genuineness.

They challenge the most critical inspection, and defy all opposition.

The same line of argument presented in proof of the Gospels, holds true in regard to all the books of the New Testament ; and so we have in them not only a rule of faith and practice which inspires confidence, but the only sure foundation for our hope of salvation on earth and glorification in heaven.

Let us now proceed to examine the Authenticity and Genuineness of the *Old Testament*.

And first we will take up the *Pentateuch*, or the books of Moses.

It is enough in general terms, that the New Testament references authenticates the Old, in which the Pentateuch stands as the basis of all.

While our faith rests upon the authority of our Lord, yet at the same time it may acquire a degree of intelligence, if not of strength, by such a survey of the Mosaic books as opportunity will permit us to make here.

We have the authority of Josephus for saying that the one volume or roll of Mosaic writings had in ancient times the same five-fold division which was known in his day.

This book of the law was one book, five parts, the order and sequences of a work by one author, and so connected that they cannot be transposed.

Genesis covers the whole pre-Mosaic period ; Exodus is a narrative of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt and the promulgation of the Law of Sinai ; Leviticus recites the functions of the priesthood, the tribe of Levi ; Numbers takes up the history of the wanderings of the people in the wilderness ; and Deuteronomy is an after-part, giving to the law a more spiritual aspect, much after the manner of the Prophets.

All of these books, except Genesis, relate to the time of the great Law-giver ; Genesis however, stretches on back from his time, through the line of the Patriarchs to the beginning of the world.

Down to the time within three hundred years of Christ, it was universally understood that the Pentateuch was the fundamental law of the Hebrews, that Moses was its author, and that its origin was of a quite remote antiquity.

To this point, historically speaking, the path is clear as day ; precisely the same traditions regarding the origin of these books prevailing then as are current in our own time.

If we had nothing more to bring forward, these traditions alone would throw the origin of these books back of the traditions some two hundred years, more or less, which would mark a point only a few hundred years later than the time of the accepted chronology of the Mosaic writings ; or, in other words, up to the very beginning, if not beyond, what is known as the historic period.

Herodotus, among the earliest historians, flour-

ished four hundred and fifty years before Christ.

The originals of the Jewish books belong to a period anterior to this great pioneer, who is called the father of history.

But we have something besides this kind of testimony bearing upon the subject under consideration.

We have a people at the period of the Ptolemies whose national centre is in Judea, and who are scattered in every part of the known world; a people of the same origin, distinct in spite of all dispersions, from every other people, yet strikingly similar to each other, and possessed of the same traditions.

The law, therefore, which they hold in common as coming down from heaven on Mount Sinai, must have antedated the migrations and wanderings which made them familiar with each other along all the lines of traffic in the then known world.

As the original source of a river must be somewhere higher up than the tributaries flowing into and forming a constituent part of that river, and as the magnitude of these branches, and their distance from each other, furnish some data for estimating how far away the main head-spring at least must be, so these branches of the Hebrew stream of life, separated widely, yet bearing on their bosom the same common law, attributed to the same author, tend to locate the head-spring of Hebrew unity and drill-period away back of the Jewish settlements in Egypt.

Just how far back we cannot say; for when we reach a point which precedes the dispersion into all lands, then we must add another indefinite period to account for the accumulated traditions to which they held, and for the national drill to which they had evidently been subjected, and for all the influences that go to make up a historical phenomenon which the dispersion did not destroy.

It is simply an incredible thing that this peculiar people could have been in error about the rebuilding of their city after their return from exile in a strange land; it is likewise incredible that they were mistaken in their belief that before this time there were kings, and wise men called prophets, and that during the reign of these kings were the palmy days of their nation.

But tracing our way back to such a distant time as that above referred to, we must then allow another long period for the rise and successful development of a people up to the point of time, when, according to an eternal law of economics, a nation has so far fulfilled its purpose as to enter upon the descending scale towards decay.

At whatever point of time in history these Hebrews may have had their rise; what they were in Ptolomy's time, or what they are in our own day,—their origin must have been very remote; and their institutions and laws, beginning with *their* beginning could have been no other than those now known to us as the Laws of Moses, and possessed by them from the first, the marks of which all subsequent time has failed to obliterate.



The Hebrew race, which certainly was not born in a day, demands for its peculiar phenomena the Mosaic Law.

That people accounts for this law, and this law accounts for that people.

And the necessary periods for the development of each confirms the periods allotted by tradition.

This gives rise to another class of questions with which we often meet, viz: Did Moses *himself* write these books of the law, or Pentateuch?

If so, then are they entirely free from *later* touches by *other* hands?

Granting this to be true, and still *another* arises: Are they to be regarded as of purely *divine* authority?

That these five books are not only Jewish, but of Mosaic origin, we know from purely historical evidence with even greater certainty than we can know the authority of any other ancient writing.

We know it by Jewish tradition, which gives every evidence of reliability; and we know it by the authority of Christ.

In all the controversies of the different schools, Jewish as well as Christian—controversies relating to doctrine, as well as those relating to canonical books of the Bible—the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch has never once been denied.

We are, however, met with the fact that the real authority of a writing may be found in one person, while the writer may be another.

For example, Luke's Gospel is of authority, be-

cause while Luke wrote, Paul was the real author.

Mark's Gospel is regarded as the product or dictation of Peter; and so too the New Testament has the acknowledged authority of Christ, although not a single word of it was personally written by Him.

In like manner, had there been a school of Scribes in the time of Moses to *record* the Laws and usages which he established, making copies of the same in accord with their observation, and noting the time, place and manner of their enactment by him, the books would on that account have been none the *less* authentic and Mosaic.

But there is no indication whatever that there *was* in his time a class of writers either authorized or qualified for such a work as this.

We are already persuaded of the historical *reliability* of these five books of Moses, and of the later writing of the *canon* also; and therefore may justly appeal to them as evidence.

And in doing so we find that after the battle with the Amalekites, the first of their battles on record, "the Lord said unto Moses, write this for a memorial in a book."

An historical paragraph begins by saying, "And Moses wrote all the word of the Lord in a book."

Again it is added, that "Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys, by the commandment of the Lord;" and still again, "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book."

And no record can be plainer than this which touches on the end of Moses' career, from which we read, "And it came to pass that when Moses commanded the Levites which bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, 'Take this book of the Law and put it inside of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.'"

We find then that *Moses* wrote a book with his own *hand*, and that this book was a record at least both of the laws and events of that time, and can be none other substantially than that one book, which with its several divisions, is called "the book of the law of Moses."

And the fact remains that *no* one, whether Christian or unbeliever, questions to-day but that the Pentateuch of Moses as we accept it, was received as the writing of the great Jewish Law-giver when Ezra was at the zenith of his influence after the Babylonian captivity.

It is admitted that every Jew who returned out of that captivity, twenty-three hundred years ago, held these five books to be the works of Moses, the man of God.

It stands without dispute, without any controversy then, down to the time within four hundred and fifty years of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Let us fix this point in our memory, while we now attempt to plant ourselves on some more remote mountain-top of history.

We find likewise that all the ancient writings, whether Egyptian or Chaldean, corroborate the testimony of the Bible in declaring that these Hebrews were slaves in the land of Egypt.

They also agree that they migrated into southern Syria, under the leadership of a man called Moses, whose name signifies, "one drawn out of the water."

It is also universally admitted that they settled in this new land, which had long before been promised to their fathers, about the year 1450 before Christ.

Here then we have a *second* date established,—a date which no skeptic has ever called in question.

And with the two historic dates, one 450 B. C., and the other 1450 B. C. fixed, leaves us a space of only 1000 intermediate years to be accounted for.

This may seem to us a long period of time, but it is not so when applied to the history of nations.

There were two of the strongest motives that can influence the human mind and will, which conspired to preserve the five books of Moses from all corruption.

First, they contain a list of all those who came out of Egypt with Moses and entered into Palestine.

Second, they give a description of the land that was apportioned to each individual person named in that list.

To *lose* those books therefore, which the Jews regarded as so precious to their personal interest,—the genealogy of their household—to suffer them to be tampered with, was to endanger the title to every man's field, from Dan to Beersheba. And hence there is no reason to doubt that the Pentateuch was preserved inviolate during the thousand years that intervened between the time of Moses and the time of Ezra ; the latter being one of the captives who returned out of exile.

But we find that Daniel, long before the time of Ezra, speaks of this law of Moses.

He bases his own private character and mode of personal conduct upon it.

His writing takes us back one hundred years *nearer* to the time when Moses gave that law to the world.

When king Josiah mounted the throne of Judah, he found it polluted by the weakness and idolatry that characterized the reign of his father, king Manasseh, and then there came an overwhelming and powerful revival of religion throughout the kingdom.

Monarch and subject united in humiliation before God.

Numbers of people bowed down before the Jehovah whom they had so grossly offended by turning away from Him to other gods.

But it is distinctly stated that the primary *cause* out of which this revival suddenly sprung and spread, was the finding of a copy of the five books

of Moses, and learning therefrom what Moses had commanded against the sin of idolatry.

One thousand and four years before Christ, we learn that Solomon re-collected the temple service and worship, but he re-established them, we are distinctly told, according to the law that was contained in the Pentateuch.

This takes us back to four hundred and fifty years of the *death* of Moses.

But *David* refers *constantly* to the five books of Moses in the *Psalms*.

The law of Moses was the foundation on which the religious character of all the psalms of David rests.

Prior to David however, we meet with *Samuel* in history; and in a record of his work he presupposes the existence of the Mosaic books.

But only three hundred and fifty years intervened between Samuel and Moses.

Joshua *succeeded* Moses as the leader of the chosen people.

Again and again in his addresses to them did he reprove, exhort and encourage Israel, but always on the basis of the books of the law of Moses.

With the gap between Moses and Samuel bridged over by Joshua, we are thus carried back link by link in this chain of historical testimony to the very days in which Moses lived and wrote.

And we want no *better* proof of the fact which we have sought to establish, than that which is furnished to us by secular history in the instances from which we have quoted.

On the other hand, if these writings of Moses were forged, then it was by men, who in doing so, voluntarily blackened the character of their own lineage and ancestry.

If we should go to work and forge a genealogy for ourselves, we certainly would not manufacture one that would represent our forefathers as the most criminal set of men who ever escaped the penalty of justice from the law of God or man.

No one pretends for a moment that any except the *Jews* could have been responsible for the Old Testament record; and therefore if they forged them, they must have had some motive for so doing.

But what did these alleged forgers do?

Why, they compiled a record of their own family tree, which shows that their fathers were overwhelmed by sin in everlasting shame and contempt.

They describe the ancient Hebrews as degraded *idolaters* in the land of Egypt.

*One* spirit pervaded them *all*, as may be seen from the fact that when God promised them a land, all their own, flowing with milk and honey,—even when all *this* was set before them, they were willing to give up all hope of freedom, prosperity, and their deliverance from slavery, if they might only have that for which depraved appetites still longed for—"the leeks and fleshpots of Egypt."

They are represented as bowing down in the worship of a calf which their own hands had made out of their golden ear-rings, and doing this in

the very presence of God then being displayed upon Mount Sinai ; and yet too cowardly to fight the battles that were necessary to gain the possession of their promised inheritance, until God at last refused to let *one* of that miserable cowardly generation enter the goodly land promised to their fathers.

Yet all this is a forgery some would have us believe, not of the Egyptians who were their hereditary enemies, neither of the Philistines their national foes, but of themselves—the forgery of the Jews upon their own ancestors.

How preposterous ! It is as though in the dead of night a man should steal out under the covert of darkness to the tomb of his deceased father, and there with chisel and mallet in hand, should attempt to erase from memory's tablet the honorable record of his life, and forge in its stead an epitaph that would criminate him as the most disreputable villain every known in history.

Yea, a man commits a forgery on his own *family* when he tries to impose a fabulous record of the same, whether commendable or derogatory, on those who know him.

It is to be remembered, however, that no one who assumes or attempts to show that Moses did *not* write the Pentateuch can appeal to any contemporaneous literature in support of his assumption.

There are no writings in existence with which he can *compare* the books of Moses, or from which he



can draw any *inference* to discredit the great Law-giver of Israel; and hence the denial is based upon pure unbelief and gratuitous assumption.

On the other hand, the divine origin of the Pentateuch rests upon a two-fold testimony; that of Moses himself, in which he claims that he received the law from God, and in addition thereto the sweeping and conclusive authentication of the whole from the *life* of Him who is the foundation of our faith in the things transmitted to us.

We thus have, both from a human and purely historical source, testimony opening up a pathway before us in our search for the true originals, which is altogether remarkable, and indeed absolutely without a parallel in any other documents of ancient date.

This historical verification of the Pentateuch is as much of a miracle in itself, as are the origin and preservation of the Jewish people, *neither* of which can be accounted for except by a wise provision in the divine purpose.

Taken together, they stand as a mutual affirmation of the supernatural in history, which no science or philosophy can gainsay, and which, while it confirms the believer, taxes to the uttermost the ingenuity of all who deny the special hand of God in revelation and religion.

The internal argument for the divine authority of the five books of the Pentateuch are *also* very conclusive.

It might possibly be established on some other

theory that these books are indeed what they purport to be, were the internal evidence left to stand alone, but coupled with the external, they make it hardly possible to resist the conviction that they came from God, and were transmitted to us by the hand of Moses.

It is evident that the Bible is a Revelation from God, because it contains precisely that kind of information which we most need, and which could come from no other possible source.

And however obscure its presentation of some subjects may be, yet on every question connected with our present duty and interest, it speaks with amazing clearness and simplicity.

The moral *character* of God, so far as it can be investigated and comprehended by us is plainly revealed.

The doctrines and *precepts* of the Bible are such as we might have *expected* from a Being of infinite wisdom and perfection, even could we have known beforehand that a revelation of His mind and will was intended.

Nevertheless the precepts and doctrines of the Bible meet with violent opposition from the spirit of the world.

It is a very common thing therefore for those who attack our faith, to assail the *truth* of the Bible, and especially on what may be called *historical* grounds.

And yet the historical element is the most extensive of all others in the Bible.

Here are sixty-six separate books or treatises, nearly all written by different authors; and their dates are spread over the space of fifteen centuries.

The earliest of these writers had been dead more than a thousand years before the last one took up his pen.

Each was independent of the others.

The styles are distinct, and therefore the volume cannot have been forged by a single hand.

Nor can it have been the result of collusion or conspiracy, for the different writers belong to diverse ages, lived in different countries, and therefore could never have met and consulted together, because they lived at different periods.

They have however written conjointly the most wonderful history in the world, fully as remarkable for its unity as for its diversity.

It gives us the first and only record we have of the creation of the globe and its inhabitants.

For many things which it records we have no authority whatever, and the truth of these depends upon other than external evidence.

The incidents recorded are exceedingly numerous, and of the most diversified character, while the casual allusions to these incidents by the various writers are almost countless.

It necessarily follows that the verification of the whole Bible is a work of great labor, and that its refutation requires at least equal attainments and exertion.

Looking at what has already been effected in these two contrary directions, we have nothing to fear for the future, but every reason to hope and be confident.

Speculative objections to the word of God may be flowing in upon us from the one side in great numbers ; but they are resisted and overwhelmed by the tide of positive facts which daily rises and increases in volume upon the side of faith.

Under these circumstances there is no just ground for skeptics' rejoicing over the difficulties of verifying every incident of the Bible.

So far from this, the candid and dispassionate mind must admit that the evidence for the truth of Scripture is far greater and more varied than could have been looked for even by believers themselves.

Ignorance and misrepresentation may say this is not true ; but we know better, and so shall proceed to give the proof of our assertion.

One of the most valuable classes of testimony for the truthfulness of the Bible and its general history is to be found in the correspondence between its incidental details and allusions, and the facts which can now be ascertained.

We mean by this that scholars and travelers can tell us whether the Bible is confirmed or contradicted by researches into language and literature, ancient works of art, the natural productions, topography and climate of Bible lands, the manners and customs, idolatry, position, and experience of Bible nations, &c.

Now what are the facts to be gleaned from these various sources of information ?

Why, we find that on all such matters the Bible is confirmed in thousands of instances ; it must, therefore, have been written in the ages and countries to which it has been accredited.

Its *known* accuracy in a great multitude of instances, and on points likewise in which it is capable of being tested and easily proven, together with its universal recognition by those among whom it was composed, force upon us the conviction that it is "true and righteous all together."

The extraordinary coincidences between the records of the Bible and the traditions of nations on some very important questions, have never been explained away.

Among these, the original uprightness and subsequent *fall* of man, the long *lives* of the first men, and a *flood* by which almost the whole of the race was destroyed, may be mentioned.

On all these matters we find a curious and striking agreement between Scripture and heathen traditions.

Nor is this agreement between record and traditions limited to the nations of what we call the old world ; for it has been found to extend all over America, and to the islands of the South Sea.

There are sundry books in our own and other languages where traditions such as we speak of have been collected.

Those referring to the flood have often been

read and described ; their character and agreement with the Scripture record may be learned from Sharon Turner's Sacred History of the World.

Others treating of various topics may be found in the Rev. T. S. Millington's "Testimony of the Heathen to the Truths of Holy Writ."

The confusion of tongues and the dispersion of nations are also represented in the legends of the Old World.

As we trace the stream of history backward, our evidences begin to multiply with increasing rapidity as we approach its original source, illustrating the records of Abraham and the later Patriarchs to an almost unlimited extent.

Some of the places which these ancient worthies visited, have been forgotten, and all the nations among whom they sojourned have passed away ; but the land is still there, and in its ruins and natural productions, its rivers and fountains, its mountains, valleys and plains, we see evidences of the minute accuracy of the inspired record.

The very *language* of Egypt as represented in Genesis, is preserved in hieroglyphic inscriptions on the banks of the Nile to this day.

It might have been expected that the Mosaic record from Abraham to the final occupation of Canaan would be attacked.

And so it has ; but those very assaults have called forth a Hengstenberg and a host of the most learned and able men to vindicate the truth and genuineness of the books of Moses.

The pictures which the Scriptures exhibit to us of Palestine and Egypt, of the Sinaitic peninsula and Babylonia, and other places, are true to nature and life-like beyond all dispute.

This fact of itself is surely a testimony in favor of the truth of Bible history.

As an evidence of the trustworthiness of this Holy Book in reference to Palestine and the adjacent parts, one able writer says, "We passed through the land with our Bibles in our hands, with, I trust, an unbiased determination to investigate facts, and their independent bearing on sacred history.

While on matters of science the inspired writers speak in the ordinary language of their times, (the only language which could have been understood), I can bear testimony to the minute truth of innumerable incidental allusions in holy writ to the facts of nature, of climate, of geographical position,—corroborations of Scripture, which, though trifling in themselves, reach to minute details that prove their veracity where we cannot have the like means of testing it.

I can find no discrepancies between their geographical or physical statements and the evidence of present facts.

I can find no standpoint here for the keenest advocate against the full inspiration of the Scriptural record.

The Holy Land not only elucidates, but bears testimony to the truth of the Holy Book."

The testimony of men of science and experience upon this subject must not be lightly esteemed by us ; we therefore cite a short passage from Dr. Thompson, who has spent over thirty years in the land of the Orient, and has been one of the most careful explorers and charming writers.

He says, " We ought not to impose silence upon the thousand witnesses to the veracity of the Bible, which meet the pilgrim at every turn in his pathway.

Broken columns and prostrate timbers, and cities in ruin, must bear testimony to the inspiration of prophecy ; and ravens and sparrows, and cedars and brambles, and fruits and flowers, will preach sermons and utter parables, and we shall not hesitate to listen when they begin to teach."

Those who are most familiar with the scenes depicted in the Bible, often speak as if they felt themselves living in Bible times, when passing through those lands with whose history it deals.

There is so much to remind them of this blessed book that those who are acquainted with its record are unable to resist the impressiveness that is thus added to it.

And hence travelers are in the habit of saying that the best of all guide-books to Palestine still, is the Bible ; and that its scenes are enacted over again before their eyes in the daily life and common objects of that country.

For example, Signor Pierotti only expresses the common conviction when he says, " No one can re-



side for any length of time, or travel much in the country, without being struck by the numerous traces still remaining of its former possessors, and the remarkable tenacity with which these memorials of the past are rooted in the present occupants."

We could multiply passages of this kind, but those we have already given may suffice to illustrate our point.

Then again, so many *localities* mentioned in Scripture are still to be recognized to-day that we are justified in asking, Do these argue nothing for the antiquity and credibility of the sacred history?

Is it no evidence in favor of the Bible record, that parts of the circuitous route, and many of the *stations* of the Israelites therein noted in connection with their march through the wilderness are still extant, and which, from being associated with the Scriptural narrative, serve, like the marble pillars of Tadmor in the wilderness, as monuments of its truth?

The construction of the Bible is very peculiar, so much so, that whether its claims to our belief are well founded or not, may be tested at more points than almost any other ancient book.

Not only does it comprise a summary of the internal history of the Jews, but it abounds in references to *other* nations also, whose kings are named, whose customs are described, whose language is appealed to, and whose cities and rivers are mentioned.

If from other sources all these references are

found to be correct, then it is conclusive evidence that the sacred writers must have *known* the facts which they placed upon record.

A superficial observer, however, might suspect that these allusions were borrowed ; but a careful student will perceive that they must be original, and proceed from a knowledge based upon personal acquaintance.

The great fact which we wish to urge here is, that such references to foreign lands, kings, peoples and customs, are historically correct.

When we examine into the condition of ancient nations around Palestine, in the distant past, we find that in every instance the Bible record is in exact accord with the facts.

The buried inscriptions and monuments of Assyria, the venerable remains and hieroglyphics of Egypt, and the mouldering ruins and tombs of Phœnicia, have come forth with their testimony in our own day to confirm the truth of Scripture.

If we return to Palestine, the results of recent explorations have been equally remarkable in their evidence furnished.

Its animal, vegetable and mineral productions are the very same as those of which we read in Moses and the prophets, in the Gospels, and elsewhere.

Even where some of the original animals and plants have become extinct, yet their fossils and remains are still found buried beneath the soil to tell of their former existence.

There are no palm trees now to grace the site of Hazezon-Tamar, the *city* of palm trees, as it was once known; but *petrified* palm-branches have been dug up in abundance from the soil beneath, where they once grew.

There *still* remain specimens of the cedars of Lebanon, although time and the hand of man have almost *destroyed* these primeval forests, so often mentioned in the Old Testament.

While many of the cities, towns, and villages of which we read in the Bible have long since perished, yet some of them still remain; and the traveler even of to-day can visit Hebron and Jerusalem, Damascus and Joppa, Bethlehem, Cana and Nazareth, Jericho, Tiberias, and many others.

Many of those which have fallen into decay can yet be traced in their outline, although when first discovered they appeared often as a mere heap of ruins.

The topographical accuracy of Holy Writ in reference to small and *remote* places is becoming more clearly manifest from day to day; and the result is that we know the exact location of many places mentioned in Numbers and Joshua, Samuel and Kings, the Prophecies and Gospels.

Even some of the localities visited by the Israelites in the wilderness, during the forty years of their wandering, have been brought to light in more modern times.

The Land of Edom and Mount Seir have been partly explored with striking results.

The countries of Moab and Ammon, Gilead and Bashan, have been found to correspond with what the Scriptures say of them, even to the minutest details of their description given.

There are many things which do not soon change ; and the testimony which they render is therefore all the more valuable.

The plain of Sharon, the hill country of Judea, the mountains found about Jerusalem, the plain of Jezreel, Mount Carmel, Ephraim, Tabor and Hermon, Lebanon and the mountains and plains of Moab, with Jordan and its valley, the waters of Merom, the Lake of Gennesareth, and the Dead Sea, all remain until this day to testify to the wonderful accuracy of the Book of books.

That whole land is vocal in its testimony of praise to the genuine verity of the Bible record.

Its very stones cry out and declare that the word of the Lord is true ; true in its histories, true in its poetic allusions, and true in its prophetic utterances.

From new documents that have been brought to light, and from the mounds of Assyria, the sands of Egypt and the dust of Palestine, voices have come to tell us that the Bible is true.

Even science has paid *her* tribute ; and not merely archæology, but geology, philology and ethnology, have come forward to augment the cloud of witnesses.

There is a *class* of witnesses to which we have not *yet* distinctly alluded ; namely, the *literary* records of ancient times.

Books were written at a very early date ; and although the first uninspired documents have doubtless perished, yet we have fragments or complete writings which carry us back to a very remote period.

In Chaldea and in Egypt, in Syria and Greece, and elsewhere, men wrote accounts of former days and other nations as well as their own.

Some of these, and particularly the writers in the Greek language, such as Herodotus, treat of countries mentioned in the Scriptures ; and from them we gather valuable confirmation of the Bible record.

We could wish that it were within the power of every one to search these writings for himself.

This, however, is not to be expected, being neither practical nor possible ; but we can assure such among our readers, if there should be any who cannot investigate for themselves, that what we say is true in this at least, that the Bible account of ancient nations and countries is often illustrated and confirmed by these writers in a very remarkable manner.

At a still later date, and within the New Testament times, there were numerous Greek and Latin writers from whom we acquire a vast amount of details confirmatory or explanatory of the Gospels, Acts and Epistles.

It is not to be denied that difficulties remain, that *many* things in Scripture are passed over in silence by secular writers, and that cases occur where the statements differ.

All this however may be admitted without creating any just cause for prejudice against our defence.

The reality of history is not supposed to be impaired by the omissions and incongruities of historians in respect to certain facts, but the truth of history is often to be elicited by means of the keenest criticism.

When, for example, two authors differ in their account of the same event, we are not at once to conclude that no such event ever occurred, but endeavor to ascertain wherein the true narrative consists.

And so, if Herodotus tells us something which the Bible presents in a different way, we are not at once to say that it never transpired, but by investigation and reason endeavor to determine which account is most likely under the circumstances to be correct.

In all such cases, it must be admitted that the statement of eye-witnesses and contemporaries is to be preferred.

If then, the sacred writers were eye-witnesses and contemporaries, we prefer them; and we appeal to Herodotus or Xenophon, not to confirm all the minor details, but to attest the general statement.

Let it not be forgotten that almost the whole of the Old Testament was before the time of either of the two Greek writers just named.

These men traveled in the East it is true, but

they were foreigners there, and so labored under divers disadvantages through not being Orientals, as the sacred writers were.

And yet, notwithstanding all the difficulties under which they wrote, their literary works are very valuable to the Bible student in his search after truth.

From all that has been said, it will be apparent that we have a good answer to give to the question of the secularist as to *why* we believe the Scriptures to be true.

We believe the record of the sacred writers because that record is confirmed in its broad outlines and in many of its minor features by a multitude of unexceptionable witnesses.

There are traditions and inscriptions, and ancient ruins and relics innumerable ; there are the natural productions and the physical features of Bible lands ; there are existing cities, manners and customs, superstitions and languages ; and there are the direct or indirect statements of both native and foreign authors whose books have come down to us, all supporting and corroborating each other in their various contributions of facts, incidents and narrative, thus forming a continuous chain of unbroken links in the line of their testimony.

Such then are *some* of the sources of evidence upon which we depend in establishing the veracity of the Bible ; but these are not all.

The existence of the Jewish nation with its peculiar rites and traditions is a *visible* attestation to the truth of divine Revelation.

This nation is scattered over all the world, and fixes the time of its dispersion at about eighteen centuries ago; yet the historical *account* of that great event or catastrophe, has kept it as fresh and vivid in their minds as if it had occurred but a hundred years since.

The Old Testament was carried along with it on its *second* mournful exodus, and we know that this Book was as firmly believed in then as it is now.

It contained the national *history*, as well as the laws and doctrines of their national religion.

At that time the Babylonish captivity was not much farther off from them than the reign of King Edward III., of England, is from us.

Indeed it was so recent in time, and fresh in thought, as to be almost impossible for the nation to be imposed upon by a mere fiction.

And why should our own history, in which we repose such confidence, be any more true than theirs.

They had a native *literature* at any rate, as early as the time of Moses, which is farther back than we can go in our national literature.

Whatever else it may have lacked, this nation had its records which it accounted sacred as well as true, because embodying both its religion and its history.

The forgery of these records by a successful impostor is therefore an *inconceivable* thing, from the fact that no nation could be *induced* to accept as a well-known, public and ancient national history,



and statute book, that which was *neither* ancient, public nor well-known as such.

In the case of the Jews, an attempt of this kind would be attended with a still more enormous difficulty; for the nation was composed of twelve tribes, one of which was the Levitical and priestly; the rite of circumcision embraced every male child born; the time for the annual celebration of their nation's origin, by appointed rites and ceremonies, was as well known to them as the date of our American independence is to us.

With peculiar regard to accuracy the feast of Purim was referred to Esther's time, the first and second temples to fixed dates, and their internal arrangements to distinct persons.

In the same manner, the movements of the sacred ark and tabernacle had been carefully noted down; and in the Pentateuch itself the actual circumstances which gave occasion for divers laws and enactments were placed on record.

In all this too there is air of probability and veracity, at least equal to if not surpassing, what we find in the most authentic history extant of any other nation.

The only possible explanation, therefore, to be given of the fact that the Jewish nation bodily received this Book as its own, and as true, affords the strongest presumption that it is true.

The objections to its credibility are mainly critical; but when compared with the preponderating evidence brought forth in its favor, they are "as the small dust of the balance."

A recent writer has collected an immense number of these minor critical objections, and shows most of them to be only hypercritical, and such as can have no perceptible weight except with those who merely look at their number rather than their character.

As an argument against the actual truth of the Pentateuch and other historical books of the Old Covenant, these objections are too insignificant to shake the faith of any thinking people.

Most of them are the mere quibbles of unbelievers, who in their desire and effort to resist the truth themselves, seek also to weaken its force upon others.

But the Jews, as a nation, stand forth before the world as the original eye-witnesses of, and contemporaries with, the historical facts recorded in the Old Testament ; they can therefore look with pity and *contempt* upon all those who deny its truth in the face of such evidence based upon personal knowledge.

A *similar* argument may be deduced from the existence of the Christian Church in proof of the truth of the *New* Testament.

It is a very easy matter for us to trace the thread of Christian history back to the early part of the second century, say to within seventy or eighty years of the death of Christ ; yea, the fact is we can follow it even further, but this may suffice for our present purpose.

At the period to which we refer, the church of

Christ already existed, and accepted as true history and real institutions the statements and precepts which are contained in the New Testament.

Not merely did the church exist ; but it was established in provinces and cities far distant from each other, and was actuated by a missionary spirit of irresistible energy.

The different sections of the church believed the same set of facts and doctrines, and referred their origin to one common source and centre.

Their forms of worship were similar, their organization a true and inspired record of the life and death of their founder, and of the labors and teachings of His immediate disciples.

If the books containing this record were a forgery, then they were written either during the life-time of the Apostles or later.

If the forgery occurred during their life-time, why did they not oppose and prevent its acceptance?

If it was not effected until after their death, how came the churches all to receive it as of Apostolic origin ?

Surely the early Christians were not all blind men, nor were they all hypocrites ; and yet the New Testament was at once lifted to the highest position of authority, and remained unquestioned in every known community of orthodox believers.

This could *not* have happened if the record had been *untrue*.

It might be said, that good men *would* not have forged such a book, and that bad men *could* not.

It is a simple matter of fact that the whole tone, texture, complexion, imagery and spirit of the sacred books are in perfect accordance with the times, countries and circumstances in which they profess to have been written.

The objections which are made to the historical veracity of the Scriptures in general, are based upon certain parts of them, and especially those which involve the miraculous element.

Our answer to this class of objections has already been given, under a discussion of those passages in defence of miracles.

In concluding this special phase of our subject, we may say that in *all* cases where the general credibility of a record is manifest, it is unfair to reject it either because of some *minor* details which we may not account for with our present knowledge, or because of certain statements which we may not be able to harmonize.

The truth is, however, that no real or *forcible* objection to the veracity of the Holy Scriptures can be *found*.

Wherever the truth of Scripture can be tested, it has been already done, and most critically so in every phase and department of its utterances; and it has come forth victorious.

And so it must ever be; for the word of the Lord abideth forever.

The more it is tried, the more clearly will its truth be revealed, and the more potent and far-

reaching will become its transforming influence and energy ; until among all nations it shall be recognized as the word of God, and its possession be above the price of rubies.

## TRANSMISSION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

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The Bible is composed of two parts, Judaism and Christianity ; but they constitute only one system,—one in principle, authorship, and design.

Christianity is but the outgrowth of Judaism, the germ-bud matured into fruit, the dawn brightened into noon-day, the architectural plan developed into a magnificent temple.

To say that the Bible is a *wonderful* book, is only to express what we are happy to think our readers all realize for themselves.

They are acquainted with its principal division into the Old and New Testaments, and with its further divisions into books, chapters and verses.

They understand the general structure of the Scriptures even better perhaps than they do their contents.

They have some knowledge of the fact that the Bible was written by various authors, in different ages, and not all in the same language.

They are aware that the sacred volume was preserved from generation to generation in written copies until the art of printing took the pen from the hand of the writer, and substituted for it a more expeditious, accurate, and economical method of reproducing the Bible as well as other books.

They have been told, or they may have seen, that there are still in existence written copies of

the Scriptures which are more than fourteen hundred years old.

They know, therefore, that books may last as long as the entire period which elapsed from the death of Moses to the birth of Christ.

And finally, they are aware that there exists a series of translations of Scripture, embracing the Old Testament, which reaches back at least 2,100 years.

They have come down to us through a long track of years, and through the hands of numerous transcribers.

Such well-known facts as these will show that the Bible has a *wonderful history*, as well as structure and composition.

The very fact of the great *age* of some portions of it is wonderful.

Herodotus, who is often called the father of history, and who composed his work four hundred and fifty years before Christ, was one thousand years later than Moses, and according to the calculations of some learned men, was twelve hundred years later.

It is now more than 2,300 years since Herodotus wrote, but more than 3,300 since Moses wrote his five books of the Pentateuch, if we adopt the shortest computation.

There is not a Greek author known who lays claim to so great an antiquity as Moses.

Homer, the oldest among them, is reputed to have lived five or six hundred years later than Moses.

The Jewish historian and law-giver is in fact the first of all known authors ; and the books of Joshua and Job appear to have been the next.

There are monuments in Egypt inscribed with hieroglyphics which may reach as far back as the time of Moses ; but their date is only conjectural, and it is by means of the Bible that we get the first actual date of an Egyptian monument.

This is so remarkable a circumstance that it deserves to be noticed specially.

The temple of Karnak at Thebes, has among its sculptures the names of the nations conquered by Sheshonk or Shishak.

Among these, there is the representation of a king with his arms tied behind him ; and a tablet affixed, states that this is the " king of Judah."

One of the characters on this tablet intimates that it is the land of Judah to which the conquest refers.

From the Bible we learn Shishak came against Jerusalem in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign (B. C. 971), and plundered the temple and the king's palace.

This is therefore a contemporaneous monument of the conquest of Judea ; and it is worthy of special notice that the first certain voice which greets our ears from the ruins of Thebes is an echo of the Divine record which shall never pass away.

Some of the sacred writings of the Hindoos belong to a very early period, and are ascribed by the Hindoos themselves to dates which are absurdly erroneous.



The eminent Sanscrit scholar, Prof. Muller, who considers the Veda as the most ancient work of this kind, does not venture to make it so old as the writings of Moses by two or three hundred years.

The Buddhist books also claim to be extremely ancient; but Buddha himself did not die till about the year 543 B. C., and the books concerning him must have been written since that time.

As to the oldest Chinese books, some claim that the *Yih-King* was written as early as 1150 B. C.; but in its actual form it is admitted that we owe it to Confucius, who died B. C. 479.

Zoroaster has had a remarkable antiquity claimed for him; but he was apparently a contemporary of Confucius; and the Zeud-avesta or sacred book of the Parsees (fire worshippers), which contains the doctrine of Zoroaster, is much more modern.

The oldest remains of Roman literature extant are not so old as the last book of the Old Testament by a century and a half.

Thus it appears that, with the exception of some Sanscrit books possibly, there are, outside of the Bible, no books in the world so ancient even as the writings of Solomon, and certainly none at all that are so old as the Pentateuch.

This is, to say the least, a significant fact; and it teaches us a lesson of gratitude to that Providence which has preserved to us the Old Testament Scriptures.

The preservation of the Bible will appear all

the more remarkable to us when we consider some other circumstances in connection with it.

Of all the books which were written before the Old Testament was complete, and even since it was compiled, how many have perished !

And although the Hebrews never attained to the proud distinction of many other nations in the world, and were not, properly speaking, a literary people, yet their sacred books have come down in their integrity through the ages to our own day.

The Jews, as a people, passed through many changes.

Sometimes they almost relapsed into barbarism, as under the judges ; sometimes they fell into base idolatry, as under the kings ; they were invaded and conquered again and again by foreign foes ; they were taken captive into strange lands by wholesale deportation, they were subject to the rule of foreign kings, the regular succession of their high priests was lost ; and at last they were scattered abroad upon the face of the earth ; but their Holy Scriptures never perished.

These were beyond the power of Shishak and the Egyptians, of Nebuchadnezzar and the Assyrians, of Alexander and the Greeks, of Titus and the Romans : " The word of the Lord endureth forever."

Frail as is the material upon which its truths are inscribed, nothing has the vitality of a good book ; we may therefore expect the best of books to remain, " engraved as in eternal brass."

And yet the very goodness of this book has caused it to be attacked, persecuted, and cast into the fire oftener than any other book. Nevertheless, through the grace of God in the hearts of His people. their language has ever been, "O, how I love thy law!"

This consciousness of its excellence has led good men to labor both for the preservation and the dissemination of the inspired records, which have been more extensively diffused, more frequently translated, more profoundly studied, and more widely honored and obeyed than any other books.

Not only Evangelists and Apostles, but Moses and the Prophets, speak daily to men in almost every language under heaven.

God has taken care of His own book, and His people have ever been willing instruments in promoting His designs concerning it.

We have spoken of the Pentateuch, or the five books of Moses, as being the oldest writings in the world of which we know the date.

In the historical records of Scripture we find the death of Moses, which according to the calculations of Archbishop Usher, occurred 1451, B. C.

We have already remarked that some believe the death of Moses to have occurred two hundred years earlier than this.

Whichever figures we adopt, the question may be asked, whether the art of writing existed at so remote a period.

If we can show that it did, then it will appear at once that the books of Moses may be as ancient as we believe them, and as they profess to be. Hence an examination of the books themselves is necessary.

It is a curious fact that in Genesis we find no direct mention made of writing.

The purchase of the cave of Machpelah by Abraham was "made sure" to him in the presence of the Hittites,—literally, "it was settled" to or upon him; but there is no record of a written deed.

Although writing is not clearly mentioned before the time of Moses, we have good reason to believe that it was not unknown, and the allusions in the earlier books of the Bible exactly coincide with that belief.

Judah's signet-ring, of which we read in Genesis 38:18-25, most probably bore an inscription of some kind; likewise the ring of Pharaoh which was worn by Joseph, referred to in Gen. 41:42.

We know, as a matter of fact, that both in Egypt and in Assyria, seals and rings from a very early period were engraven with legible inscriptions.

In Exodus 28:9-12, 21, we find express direction given that the names of the tribes should be engraven upon the two onyx stones of the ephod, and also upon the twelve stones of the high priest's breast-plate, "like the engravings of a signet."

And again in verse thirty-three, the plate of pure gold for the high priest's mitre was to bear the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord," graven upon it like the engravings of a signet.

In Egypt, from which these Hebrews had just come, this art of engraving upon gems and metal was carried to a high degree of perfection.

The Lord says in Job 38 : 14, when speaking of the earth, " It is turned as clay to the seal."

We have no doubt but that the allusion is to the small cylindrical rollers, such as were used for seals in Assyria, which being turned upon a piece of clay, gave to it an impression from their engraved surfaces.

Although, as we have already observed, there is not any direct reference to written characters in Genesis, yet they are frequent in the rest of the Pentateuch, and also in the book of Job.

We called attention once before to Ex. 17 : 14, where after the defeat of the Amalekites, the Lord said unto Moses, " Write this for a memorial in a book ;" or more exactly, " in *the* book ;" as if Moses had already commenced his record of Israel's history.

This passage disposes of the theory that the art of writing was given by inspiration, and was first exemplified in the two tables of stone upon which the Divine hand recorded the ten commandments, in Ex. 24 : 12.

The words, " Write this for a memorial in the book," show that men knew how to read and write, and that books in some form were already invented.

We have not said anything of Gen. 5 : 3, where the word " book " may mean simply a register,

and besides, supplies no clear historical reference.

Job is described as having been acquainted with writing and books.

He cries out, "Oh, that my words were now written! Oh, that they were printed in a book, that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!"

In our version, Job is made to say that he wishes his words were "*printed* in a book;" but the modern interpretation of the phrase is, "*inscribed* in a book."

At any rate, the writer of Job was acquainted with both writing and books; and also with the practice of carving inscriptions upon stones and rocks.

And besides, the study of *antiquities* leads to the conclusion, that what he here describes was known and practiced in Egypt as early as the days of Moses.

Not only are carved and painted *hieroglyphic* discovered which date as far back; but there are inscribed specimens of *papyrus* still extant, which, in the opinion of some, are quite as ancient.

As to the actual time, place and manner in which letters were invented, we know nothing certainly.

It is very probable that they were invented in different places; for some of the oldest alphabets known, seem to be almost independent of each other.

At the same time, however, there are some strik-

ing resemblances ; for example, between the most ancient forms of the Sanscrit alphabet and those of the Phœnician and earliest Greek.

The Egyptians ascribed the invention of writing to the god *Thoth* ; and while some have thought that writing was first practiced in Egypt, others refer it to the Assyrians, and others still, to the Pœnicians or the Syrians.

In their primary form, it is reasonable to suppose that letters may have represented some visible object ; but in most cases this resemblance has been gradually lost.

This idea is supported by the fact that most of the names given to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet are the names of familiar objects.

Thus the letter *Aleph*, for example, means "an ox ;" and the letter itself in the Phœnician alphabet, from which the Hebrew is derived, bears a striking similarity in form to the head and horns of an ox.

*Beth*, the second letter in the Hebrew, means "a house ;" but the resemblance in this case can hardly be traced, at least with our idea of a house.

*Gimel*, the third letter, means "a camel," and in its form looks very much like the head and neck of that animal.

A similar correspondence of letter to object may be traced to the end of the alphabet.

And the same principle holds true with respect to the Egyptian language, in which some of the hieroglyphics or pictorial signs formed the basis of an actual alphabet.

But without going into a history of ancient writing, enough has been given of its origin to show that man, as an imitative animal, would naturally begin at a very early period to represent visible objects by rude sketches, and that from this habit the representation of sounds and abstract ideas would follow by an easy transition.

Nevertheless, it is uncertain when alphabetical writing was first invented.

We know *this* much however, that the modern alphabets of Europe and Western Asia are almost wholly derived from that which is called Phœnician.

The latter was known in Assyria and Egypt, and is that in which the earliest specimens of the Hebrew were written.

We can trace the history of its progress and changes from six hundred years before the time of Christ, and we have reason to believe that it existed even long before that date.

The Canaanites, of whom the Phœnicians formed a part, were engaged in commerce at a very early period; and as they were in the Holy Land during Abraham's time, their mode of writing may have been known to the patriarchs even before Jacob and his family went into Egypt.

At any rate we cannot believe that Moses, who was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians could have been ignorant of the art of writing which they practiced.

The tables of stone and the writings of Moses



were deposited in the ark ; the book was lost, but the tables of stone were still in the ark when the temple was built, as we learn from 1 Kings, 8 : 9.

Books and writing, in some form, were undoubtedly known as far back as the time of Moses, and therefore the Pentateuch could have been written by him.

As an evidence that he really did, we find that the subsequent history of the Jews is based upon the *existence* of this book, which contained at once the annals, the laws, and the religious code of the nation.

Accordingly, it is often referred to and quoted as "the *law*," "the *book* of the law," and "the book of the law of Moses."

We meet with it under one or another of these appellations in Joshua, who died 1425 B. C., in the time of David, who died 1015 B. C., of Solomon, who died 975 B. C., of Amaziah, 839 B. C., of Josiah, 624 B. C., and of Nehemiah and Ezra, 445 B. C.

These are only a *few* of the references to the law, the existence and influence of which may be traced through all the *later* books of the Old Testament, historical, poetical, and prophetical.

The law "written by Moses," permeates as it were, the entire Old Testament Scriptures; and therefore to take *away* what relates to it would render the remainder utterly *meaningless* to us.

The evidence for some of the other books of the Bible is far less distinct; but they are so con-

nected by historical narrative of life, incidents, and belief, that they must either stand or fall together.

By means of a critical comparison it must be admitted that they bear in common all the marks of genuine contemporary records.

Their allusions to other countries, to idolatrous practices, to geography, and much else besides, are all confirmed by an ever-growing mass of contemporary evidence.

We have already referred to the case of Shishak; and similar identifications have been frequently discovered in Assyria and elsewhere.

Another kind of proof is found in cross references and quotations.

Let any one, for instance, compare what Joshua said of the man who should rebuild Jericho, and the record of what occurred when the city was rebuilt in Ahab's time, over five hundred years later, as contained in 1 Kings, 16 : 34.

The evident conclusion would be that the author of 1 Kings must have known the book Joshua, to which he refers, and also that he accepted it as genuine.

That books and writing continued in use among the Hebrews after the time of Moses, we have sundry proofs.

Thus David says by way of prophecy, in personification of Christ, "Lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me," &c.

There are similar allusions to rolls, in the book

of Jeremiah 36 : 2, 14, 20, 21 and 22, of Ezekiel 2 : 9-10, 3 : 1-3, and of Zachariah 5 : 1-2.

Whether these rolls were written upon papyrus we cannot say, nor does it matter ; but very likely the material was papyrus, yet they were inscribed nevertheless.

The references to writing and books, contained in the historical portions of the Bible, are very numerous.

Solomon alone digressed from the general subjects of Old Testament Scripture, and yet he says that "of making *books* there is no end."

Hence we conclude that the knowledge of writing and compiling books must have been extensive in his day.

Even the pen of iron was well known to almost all the nations of antiquity.

The Romans and Greeks both had it, the former calling it a "*stylus*," or style.

It was broad at one end and pointed at the other, and was used by them in writing upon tablets covered with wax.

It was known to the Egyptians also ; and their god *Thoth* was always represented as having something of the kind in his hand.

Some forms of it were used by them in engraving and carving inscriptions upon metal and stone.

The pen commonly known among the Hebrews was probably a reed, as in the east at this day, and was used with ink contained in an inkhorn, fastened to the writer's girdle "at his side."

Although the Hebrews always practiced writing, yet so far as we can ascertain, they did not often inscribe their memorials on stone, as the Egyptians were accustomed to do. In this respect they resembled the early Phœnicians rather, who have left but very few such monuments, the oldest of these perhaps being the tomb of Eshmunazar, found in Tyre, and executed about 600 years B. C., or near the time of the Babylonian captivity.

The Hebrews, who appear to have always known and practiced writing, certainly took no such care of other books as they did of their Scriptures.

There seems indeed to be several books mentioned in the Bible, which were allowed to perish.

One of these may have been the book of Jasher, which existed in David's time, as we learn from 2 Sam. 1:18, and which is also referred to in Josh. 10:13.

Others of this class were probably "The book of the Wars of the Lord," "The book of Nathan," "The book of the acts of Solomon," "The book of Shemaiah," and "The book of Jehu."

Of all the books written by Jews during the thousand years and upwards intervening between the time of Moses and Malachi, none certainly remain except those contained in the Old Testament.

It is quite uncertain who are the authors of *some* of the inspired books, and it is probable that some of them were written by several different persons.

This may be true of the books of Kings and Chronicles, as well of those bearing the name of Samuel.

If this presents a difficulty, it may be met and accounted for in part, possibly, by the introduction of recorders and scribes at this time.

The recorder first appears in David's reign.

And from the nature of his office, and the character of his work, he must have been what one would call a literary man, and therefore acquainted with the books of the nation.

Another official also of no little regard and influence, who first comes into notice about the same time as the above, is the scribe.

Here then were two offices filled by literary men, and implying literary duties.

The scribes were generally chosen from the tribe of Levi, a significant fact which in itself suggests that the priestly class was therefore a learned one.

Indeed, the priests necessarily *must* have paid some attention to books, since it is impossible to conceive how they were instructed in the *duties* of their office as such, except they studied the law of Moses.

But the judges also must have studied the *same* laws; because they comprised the civil as well as religious code.

As to the scribes, we find when their duties are more fully explained, that they were the keepers, copyists, and students of the Scriptures.

"The men of Hezekiah, king of Judah," who

copied out the last six or seven chapters of Proverbs, were probably scribes.

This occurred about 700 years B. C., and not far from that time Isaiah speaks as if the Bible had been completed, saying, "In that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book."

And again, "Seek ye out of the book of the Lord and read;" "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to His word, it is because there is no light in them."

Similar indications may be found in some other books, as in Ps. 19; Dan. 9:2, 10:21, Zach. 7:12, and Mal. 3:16.

The scribes were not only students, but the interpreters of the Scriptures.

Hence Jeremiah says, "The pen of the scribes is in vain," apparently hinting at their reputation for learning and wisdom, but condemning the false use made of them.

We may mention in this connection the singular fact recorded in Chronicles 2:55, referring to three distinct families of scribes residing at a place called Jabez.

The discovery of a copy of the law in the temple in Josiah's reign, became the signal for a national reformation, after the long period of spiritual declension which preceded that event.

After this came the captivity of Babylon; but we must not infer that the scribes ceased to exist and to labor.

So far from this being true, we are informed

that Ezra, who went up to Babylon, was the greatest of all the scribes, and his learning in the Scripture was referred to with honor by the heathen king, Artaxerxes, as seen from Ezra 7 : 6, 11, 12.

Besides the scribes, recorders and priests, there were the singers and others who conducted the choral services, and who must have been familiar with such poetical portions of the Scriptures and others as were sung to music.

Then there were the sons of the prophets in Elijah's time, who can hardly be supposed to have spent their time in ignorant idleness, but who would devote themselves rather to the law of God after the example of their fathers.

It is the general opinion, and probably true, that they formed a species of training school, often referred to in that day.

Then there were the zealous and pious kings and princes, of whom some at least, have contributed more or less to the Bible itself ; among whom were David and Solomon.

In addition to these there were the prophets, some of whom were certainly most thoroughly acquainted with the older Scriptures, and some of them contributing to a large portion of the whole.

We have reason to believe that prophets like Samuel, Gad, Nathan, &c., actually produced the greater part of the historical books as we now have them, using, where it was practical, the national records produced by recorders and scribes.

We do not accept the reasoning of those who

claim that the books of the Old Testament were all collected into one, at the same time.

There is an old tradition that this was done under Ezra's presidency ; but it seems more natural, and, indeed, almost a necessary conclusion that the successive books were added as they were written.

Ezra, it is true, may have arranged and corrected them under the Divine guidance, and with the co-operation of men like Nehemiah ; but it is to be observed that the canon was not closed until the time of Malachi, the last prophet, which was forty years after Nehemiah.

From this time the scribes appear to have grown in importance, and we have evidence that in the interval between Malachi and our Lord's time, they accomplished a great deal.

The aspect and arrangements of Jewish worship during the existence of the second temple, changed almost as much as they did under David and Solomon. The institution of synagogues was then established ; and in these the Scriptures were publicly read, by regular course, from Sabbath to Sabbath.

This would naturally create a demand for many copies of the Bible, which the scribes would produce for the most part.

These men were not only copyists and expounders ; but they classified and arranged the Divine precepts, and even with laborious minuteness counted the clauses, words and letters of the Holy books.



These latter they distributed under three general heads ; namely, the Law, the Prophets, and the Scriptures or other books.

They probably divided the one book of Moses into five parts, as we now have it ; the book of Psalms also into five parts, as it still appears in some copies and versions ; while the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, were doubtless fewer in number originally than now.

The scribes ingeniously contrived a plan of division by which to make the number of Old Testament books correspond to the twenty-two letters of their alphabet.

They were of necessity familiar with the contents of these several books ; and hence we find that when Herod gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, to ask them where Christ should be born, they at once quoted Micah 5 : 2, in answer to the inquiry.

The Apocryphal books contain many references to the Old Testament, and often mention portions of them by name, and also that of their authors.

The Apocryphal books were mostly written during the last two or three centuries before Christ, and therefore form valuable links in the chain of evidence, although they are not recognized as belonging to the canon of that Scripture which was given by inspiration of God.

Nevertheless they throw a useful and encouraging light upon the pious life of their own times and lands.

Tobit, from Babylon or Persia, Ecclesiasticus from Syria, and the Wisdom of Solomon from Egypt, all combine to tell us how essentially one is the impulse of the life of God in the soul of man.

So too the eager, self-forgetting, all-sacrificing courage and zeal found in the Maccabees; the calm and terse good sense of the son of Sirach; the warm praise with which Raguel exalted God when the curse which had fallen upon his house was broken and driven away; the clarion-like jubilation of the widow of Manasse, when by her soft and gentle hand the "Almighty Lord" had "disappointed him who boasted" that he would burn up the borders, and kill the young men, and dash the sucklings to the ground and make the virgins a spoil; the story of all these has a healthy tone, and strengthens faith; while at the same time it kindles hope for the minds of common men in common times.

These books have a direct value in the reflex honor which they cast upon the Scriptures of the true canon.

Their very stiffness and clumsiness throughout by way of contrast with the flexible ease and unpretentious natural grace of the inspired writings, only serve to enhance our admiration for the latter.

The author of the book of Esdras incorporates in his story many things from different parts of the Old Testament.

There is a multitude of traditions bearing upon the same subject, to which we might call attention; but omitting these, we pass on to a consideration of the ancient Greek version of the Bible, which was made in Alexandria during the first half of the third century B. C.

The translation thus made, was used by the writers of the New Testament, and is that which we call the Septuagint, or the Seventy.

The origin of this name is obscure; but all accounts agree that the work was executed for the royal library at Alexandria.

The precise date of the version is also uncertain; but it must have appeared quite early, for it had come into general use among the Greek-speaking Jews in the time of Christ.

According to Philo, an annual festival was held at Alexandria to commemorate its completion.

Without repeating the conflicting accounts of this providential occurrence, it may suffice to say that it is believed to have originated about 280 years B. C., and that the translation itself must have begun with that of the Pentateuch.

It is believed by some, that in addition to this translation, the Jews also had Chaldee versions or paraphrases (called Targums), of parts of the Old Testament before the Christian era.

This however we must leave as an open question; and yet it is true beyond doubt that after the captivity, the study and exposition of the Scriptures was general among the Jews of Palestine, Babylon, Alexandria, and other places.

Josephus says, "We have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, as the Greeks have, but only twenty-two books contain the records of all the past times, which are justly believed to be Divine; and of them, five belong to Moses, which contain his laws, and the traditions of the origin of mankind, till his death.

This interval of time was little short of three thousand years; but as to the time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, the prophets who were after Moses wrote down what was done in their times, in thirteen books.

The remaining four books contain hymns to God and precepts for the conduct of human life.

It is true our history hath been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but hath not been esteemed of like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there hath not been an exact succession of prophets since that time."

The foregoing passage shows us that Josephus had no idea of ascribing inspired authority to the Apocryphal books, and that the Jewish Old Testament was the same as our own to-day.

The Jews knew when the prophetic gift was withdrawn, and from that time they never added a new prophet to the list, nor a new book to their canonical Scriptures.

The Apocryphal writers certainly made no claim to the honor of inspiration, or if they did, their claim was never admitted.

We have now endeavored to trace the thread of history or of historical evidence from Moses to Christ, and we find that amid all changes, "the Scriptures" were known and regarded as such; that the canon was gradually formed; that the whole Bible, when complete, was translated into Greek and circulated everywhere among the Jews before the Christian era.

We find the respective order of scribes, recorders, priests, prophets, and kings, all concerned in the transmission and preservation of the sacred volume.

We find that at all times the nation, both in church and in state, was governed by the laws and maxims of the Scriptures.

There were it is true, apostacies and idolatries, captivities and persecutions,—there was an almost entire loss of the national dialect after the captivity; but the Bible continued among the people, and was never so much studied and circulated as when Chaldee and Greek were spoken instead of Hebrew.

The books of the Old Testament must have been written when they claim to have been written, from the fact that they were contemporary with the events which they record or to which they allude.

All the researches which have been made into the history and antiquities of Bible countries tend to confirm our faith in the genuineness of the Hebrew Scriptures, and to show us how safely they have traversed the ages which have elapsed since they were written.

Through God's overruling providence, this heavenly treasure has been handed down to us untarnished and complete.

#### THE TRANSMISSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The formation of the present canon, or collection of books called the New Testament, was the work of years ; and its history is a difficult study.

When an ordinary reader of the New Testament is first informed that not a single copy of an earlier date than the fourth century is extant, he may be at a loss to see what assurance we can have that the book is essentially the same as when it first left the hands of its authors.

Of the thousand known manuscripts of the New Testament, only about thirty include all the books which it now contains in our copy.

This being true, how do we know, it may be asked, that even in the earliest existing manuscripts the documents were not essentially altered from the original form in which they were composed by the Apostles and their companions ?

It may tend to allay the apprehension of such, to remark at the outset, that the New Testament stands far better in this respect than any of the classical writings of antiquity, such as the orations of Cicero and the histories of Polybius and Livy.

There is no complete manuscript of Homer older than the thirteenth century, although fragments exist of a much earlier date.

How do we know that we have the genuine

writings of the original Iliad and Odyssey, when we can compare our editions of them with no copy of an earlier date than some two thousand years after they were composed? If we have evidence for believing that we have substantially the correct text of Homer, as it was read at the opening of the Christian era, we have also much stronger reasons for a like belief respecting the New Testament.

The process of reasoning upon which this assurance is founded can be easily comprehended.

If we go back to the last quarter of the second century, we find abundant proof that a great number of copies of the New Testament were in circulation through the various provinces of the Roman Empire.

Professor Norton estimates that the number of copies of the Gospels then was not less than sixty thousand. The sixteen hundred manuscripts of the New Testament, or of parts of it, which are now known to exist, are copies, mediate or immediate, of those which were in use at that time.

Since the manuscripts extant are essentially in agreement with one another, it follows that the documents from which they sprung, in various places and in many instances distant from each other, must have had a like agreement.

Had any material difference existed in the copies of the Epistle to the Romans, for example, which the Christians of Egypt, and Syria, and Rome, and Gaul read towards the close of the second

century, that difference would inevitably have perpetuated itself in the copies derived from them, and would necessarily be manifest in those now existing.

But from the unity which prevails in the copies from all these various sources we are warranted in the conclusion, that those used at that date were substantially coincident with each other.

By the same method of argument, we are authorized to conclude that the various documents from which the manuscripts in use during the second century were transcribed, had the same essential harmony.

We are thus carried back to the life-time of the author, and of those who were conversant with him, and with his production.

Mutilation or corruption of the original manuscript, and of copies of it first put in circulation, was prevented by the presence of the writer and of those to whom his book was committed, and who were alike interested in preserving it unaltered.

And no *subsequent* alteration could be made in a manuscript from which later ones were transcribed without betraying itself the moment a comparison of it should be made with other representatives of the original writing.

It is obvious that the force of this argument is increased in proportion to the number of the manuscripts which survive, and the diversity of their local origin.

In this particular, the writings of the New Tes-



tament are placed at a striking advantage in comparison with the celebrated works of heathen antiquity. The books of the New Testament, in all probability, were written at the first on papyrus, or the ancient paper made by gluing together the strips taken from the rind directly under the bark of the plant bearing that name.

By beating these with a mallet and subjecting them to an even pressure under a roller, they were converted into convenient writing material.

But the papyrus lacked durability. Manuscripts written upon it have been recovered from the ruins of Herculaneum, and have been found in great numbers also in the tombs of Egypt.

But the New Testament books owe their preservation to the fact that they were copied from the papyrus as early as the fourth century, and on down through the Middle Ages upon a more durable substance.

This was sometimes vellum, which means the skin of a calf, although the term is sometimes applied also to the skins of kids, and of other animals.

The "Codex Sinaiticus," the great discovery of Tischendorf, is probably written on the skins of antelopes or young asses.

The manuscripts are generally written, however, on parchment, that is, on the skins of sheep or goats, which have been prepared and dressed for the purpose.

Before the time of Eumenes II., king of Perga-

mus from 197 to 159 B. C., from whom parchment, which is a corruption of *pergamena*, has its name, this substance was in use ; but he introduced some improvement in the mode of preparing it.

Even after the invention of cotton and linen paper, Biblical manuscripts were often of parchment ; indeed prior to the thirteenth century paper was very seldom used for this purpose.

The work of transcribing the sacred books was chiefly done in monasteries.

In these institutions there was usually a quiet room for scribes, who wrote with the copy before them or at the dictation of a reader.

The ink used in the most ancient manuscripts has changed its color, usually becoming of a reddish or brown tinge.

In the "Codex Vaticanus," a later hand has roughly retraced the letters, and the same has been done in the case of many others.

Since the seventh century, we find that the ingredients of ink have changed very little.

The colored inks, however, even in the oldest manuscripts have often retained their original brightness.

Red, green, and purple lines are still brilliant in them.

It is supposed that the instrument used in writing upon papyrus was the reed, to which we have referred before.

Almost all the manuscripts now extant were written with a metal pen, called the stylus, which we have already described.

The bodkin, or needle (*acus*), was used to mark off the blank leaf into columns and lines.

It was not an uncommon thing in the early centuries to stain the vellum with purple, the color which was held in the highest regard by the ancients, and to impress the letters upon this background in silver and gold.

Only twelve leaves of a beautiful codex—the “*Codex Purpurens*”—remain; four of these are in the British Museum, six in the Vatican, and two at Vienna.

They are of very thin vellum, of a purple dye, and stamped with silver letters which have turned black.

The decoration of Bible manuscripts and of other works, which was the delight of medieval monks, has served incidentally as an important means of determining their respective ages.

Whoever wishes to study specimens of the art of illumination in different centuries, or to inspect fac-similes of manuscripts of all ages, will find the splendid work of *M. Silvestre* on Paleography to be a useful and instructive treatise.

Manuscripts of the New Testament are of two classes; the “*uncial*,” as they are called from the form of the letters inscribed on them, and the “*cursive*.”

The uncial manuscripts are written in square capital letters, disconnected, but in close juxtaposition to each other, with no space between the words, and with few, if any, marks of punctuation.

The difficulty of reading books thus written can be easily understood by any one who will try the experiment on a few lines of English written in the same manner.

From the tenth century, the cursive or running hand came into vogue, with a more or less complete system of punctuation.

Thus, the "*uncial*" manuscripts are at once known to be the older, and for this reason presumably the more correct.

Yet a "*cursive*" manuscript may be of a higher authority than certain uncials for the reason that the former may be a transcript of an "*uncial*" of much earlier date.

Among the uncials there are five which are recognized as of prominent authority and value.

Of these the "*Codex Alexandrinus*," which is designated by the initial letter (A), is supposed to have been written early in the fifth century, and was sent in 1628 by the Patriarch of Constantinople to Charles I., and is now in the British Museum.

After the Old Testament, the New Testament begins with Matt. 25:6, and contains the whole, excepting John 6:50, 8:52, and 2 Cor. 4:13—12:6.

It has been printed in fac-simile type by C. G. Wolde in 1786, and in usual type by B. H. Cowper in 1860, who corrects a few mistakes of Wolde, and commits a few himself.

The date of this manuscript according to Tis-

chendorf, is about the middle of the fifth century.

The "Codex Vaticanus," designated by the letter (B), has been in the Vatican library since 1475.

In this manuscript all after Hebrews 9:14 to the end of chap. 13, 1st and 2nd Timothy, Titus, Philemon and the Apocalypse, are incomplete.

The first real collation of this manuscript, made in 1669 by Bartolucci, then librarian of the Vatican, exists only in manuscripts in the Paris Library.

The collation made for Richard Bentley by an Italian named Mica, was published by Ford in his *Apend. Cod. Alex.* in 1799.

After many attempts on the part of Protestant scholars, including Tischendorf's fourteen days' use, of three hours each, and the pitiable inaccuracy of the long-awaited for edition by Cardinal Mai (1857), Vercellone and Cozza traced an edition of the entire codex, of which the New Testament is Vol. V., in 1868.

"Codex Ephræmi," marked (C), is one of the treasures of the Paris Library.

It is in fragments, however, considerable portions of it having been lost.

It is of about the same age as the "Alexandrinus."

Tischendorf, after great labor, brought out in 1843 an edition of the New Testament part of the manuscript, and in 1845, of the Old Testament fragments, representing the manuscript, line for line, but in ordinary type.

This codex contains portions of the Old Testament on sixty-four leaves, and five-eighths of the New Testament.

The "Codex Bezaë" marked (D), presented to the University Library at Cambridge, by Beza in 1581, comprises the Gospels and the Acts.

It is referred to the sixth century.

No known manuscript has so many and such remarkable interpolations.

Last on this list, and the latest one found, is the "Codex Sinaiticus," designated by the initial letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

In May, 1844, Tischendorf, as he sat in the library of the Convent of St. Catharine—a cloister established at the foot of Mount Sinai, by the Emperor Justinian,—noticed in a waste-basket, the contents of which, he was told, had twice before been emptied into the oven, a number of sheets of parchment, inscribed in Greek characters of the most ancient form.

His practiced eye was instantly caught by these remarkable sheets, which upon examination, he found to be forty-three leaves of the Septuagint, the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament.

At his request the monks gave them to him.

He saved the manuscript of which the leaves formed a part, by informing them of their value.

But of the manuscript from which they had been taken, he had no knowledge until, on a third visit, in 1859, while he was sitting in a cell of the

cloister with one of the brethren, in whose company he was partaking of refreshments after an excursion upon the mountains, his host said to him, "I have here a Greek Old Testament."

And suiting his action to the word, he brought a manuscript wrapped in a red cloth, which Tischendorf, to his amazement and joy, found to contain portions of the Septuagint—the leaves previously obtained by him having been taken out from it—and with them the entire New Testament together with the Epistle of Barnabas in Greek,—of which only a Latin version was possessed before,—and parts of the "Shepherd of Hermas."

He was allowed to take it to his room.

But "not until I reached my chamber," he writes, "did I give myself up to the overpowering impression of the fact; my most daring dreams and hopes were surpassed.

I knew that I had an inestimable treasure for Christian science in my hand."

He could not think or sleep.

Through the whole night, indifferent to the cold, he was busy in copying the Epistle of Barnabas.

How at length he was enabled to carry away the precious discovery as a present to the Czar Alexander is an interesting story which we cannot stop now to repeat.

Tischendorf considered this manuscript older even than the Vatican Codex.

The poetical books of the Old Testament in the Sinaiticus are Stichometric, that is, divided into

lines according to parallelism, or the true principle of Hebrew poetry.

Euthalius of Alexandria, in the fifth century, published portions of the New Testament, broken up into longer or shorter clauses, for the convenience of the reader, and to avoid the use of punctuation.

The clauses terminated at the more important pauses.

Manuscripts written in this style are therefore called "Stichometric."

The amount of vellum required was a hindrance to this practice becoming general.

Yet where the division was not made to the eye, the number of *Stichoi* is frequently given at the end of manuscripts, showing that the terminal places were known to scribes and readers.

Stichometry was really nothing but a cumbrous substitute for punctuation.

One of the "uncials" just mentioned, the "Codex Ephræmi," is a palimpsest, or re-written manuscript.

About the twelfth century, the writing was almost erased, and upon it were written the Greek works of St. Ephraim, a celebrated teacher of the Syrian church, in the fourth century. In ancient Rome there was in use a kind of parchment, or other writing material from which the original writing could be easily erased and then used again.

Cicero rallies a correspondent of his on his fru-



gality, as shown in his making choice of such material upon which to write his letters.

As papyrus increased in price, and especially after the conquest of Egypt by the Mohammedans in the seventh century had cut off the supply, it became more common to make use of palimpsests, or parchments from which the writings had been rubbed off.

There are some cases where two erasures of this kind have been made.

The popular expression, however, that the monks made a *practice* of thus treating the ancient classical literature is not well founded.

The parchments which were thus re-written were generally old fragments, scraps, or other waste material.

The erasure, however, not having been in all cases complete, the original writing has in process of time not infrequently reappeared to assert its prior claim.

The restoration of the nearly obliterated letters is effected by means of chemicals, or by boiling the manuscript in oil raised to a very high temperature.

One of the most successful restorations is the Institutes of Gaius, by Neibuke (or *Neibuhr*, examine).

From the character of the material which was chosen for the palimpsests, it can be readily understood why nearly all the restorations are but fragments of the works to which they belong,

This is true of Cicero's "Republic" and of a famous historical manuscript, which were recovered by Cardinal Mai, the most successful of the laborers in this work of deciphering palimpsests.

The last mentioned manuscript was found to consist of excerpts, or a kind of common-place book drawn from *Dion Cassius*, *Diodorus*, and other Greek historians.

The utter derangement of the original order of the sheets in the palimpsest imposes on the restorer the additional task of recombining them in their proper sequence.

No one should be surprised to learn that a great number of readings exist in books which have been copied and re-copied by the hand.

Let any one try the experiment of copying a single page of printed matter, even.

Ordinarily it will be found that no inconsiderable number of mistakes have been made, although most, or perhaps all of them are only minute.

Old English authors therefore, who wrote before printing was invented, require a great amount of textual criticism.

Six manuscripts have been published, in parallel columns, of Chaucer's "Canterbury tales."

Apart from mere discrepancies in orthography, there are numerous others which affect the sense also, some of them being quite *ludicrous* instances of the carelessness of the scribes.

It might be supposed by some that the art of

printing would secure entire *accuracy* in the transmission of literary works.

It is found from actual experiment, however, that compositors and proof-readers are very far from being perfect as such.

Shakespeare's writings are *hardly* a fair example of the possible varieties of text in printed works, since his own apparent indifference to the correct printing of them caused the early editions to swarm with inaccuracies.

Errors of transcription and of the press, far more numerous than most readers imagine, have crept into our classics even of later date.

Hence, annotated editions, or editions carefully corrected to conform to the primitive text, have become necessary to the critical student.

Milton's second sonnet to Cyriac Skinner, in Todd's edition, is made to read thus :

"Cyryac, this three years day these eyes though clear,  
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,  
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot ;  
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear  
Of sun, or moon, or star throughout the year,  
Or man or woman. Yet I argue not  
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot  
Of heart or hope, but still bear and steer  
Right onward. What supports me dost thou ask ?"

Now in the Sonnet as first published by Phillips, for "light" in line three, we read "sight;" for "sight" in line four, "day;" for "a jot" in line seven, "one jot."

At Cambridge (England), is the manuscript

which was dictated by Milton to his amanuensis. In this there are several author's corrections.!

Milton, however, dictated for "Heaven's hand," "God's hand;" for "bear up," "attend to;" and for "right onward," "uphillward."

The foregoing examples will give an idea of the source of a great part of the variations of the text in the New Testament.

They grow out of the inadvertence of transcribers.

A clause or sentence ends with the same word as that which closed the sentence before.

Thus the eye of the scribe, as it turns back to the page which he is copying, falls upon the latter word, and he is therefore led to leave out the intermediate clause.

Take for an example 1 John 2: 23, the last clause of which reads, "but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also."

This phrase is printed in italics, and put in *brackets* in king James' version; but it belongs to the text.

Yet it was left out of many manuscripts, probably, because it and the clause preceding closed, in the Greek with the same word "Father."

Seeing this word therefore, in the manner before described, the scribes, when they had only copied the first clause, supposed that they had transcribed the second, and so the clause was omitted.

Differences in the *order* of words also are very

frequent, in cases where the sense is not particularly affected.

The name "Jesus Christ" continually varies in different copies.

The scribes also wrote either "Ananias by name," or "by name Ananias," giving little heed to the order seemingly where the meaning was the same. Sometimes words which differ very slightly in orthography are mistaken for one another.

Synonymous words too are often interchanged, the transcriber's mind being occupied only with the sense.

Archaic forms also will sometimes be replaced by more modern, the scribe following the fashion of spelling prevalent in his own day.

Diversities in spelling, not included under this head, are of little moment.

The omission or insertion of words which have no material effect on the sense, is a very prolific source of the various readings.

Particles in the Greek may often be inserted, or exchanged one for another, without any very perceptible alteration of the meaning.

Hence, the scribe, having the thought chiefly in mind, may by any one of these inadvertencies referred to, be led to deviate from the copy before him.

The omission or insertion of the Greek article, however, although a small word in itself and hence easily passed over or added as the case may be, yet affects the sense very materially in numerous passages.

The article will often impart *vividness* and *reality* to an expression, in which case it is indispensable to the meaning.

Take for example, the case of Luke 12:54; where by reason of the omission of the article, our version inserts the indefinite article, and so reads, "When ye see *a* cloud rise out of the west, &c."

The best manuscripts use the definite article and read, "When ye see *the* cloud," meaning not *any* cloud but a particular *kind* of cloud, such as is referred to in 1 Kings 18:44-45, indicating rain.

Since the letters were all run together in the oldest manuscripts, with no division into words, when that division was instituted there would naturally arise many cases of uncertainty as to where the lines of separation should be placed.

The judgment of scribes would differ on this point, and thus diversities would appear in the text.

Where the New Testament writers quote a part of a passage, or a fragment of a passage in the Old Testament, scribes would sometimes fill *out* the passage, either consciously, or from inadvertence it might be, the whole of the original passage being in memory.

A very great source of these various readings, no doubt, came from the habit of inserting into the writings of one Evangelist, words and clauses from the parallel passage by another.

A disposition to harmonize or assimilate the different narratives, especially the first three Gospels, is perhaps the main motive for the transitions.

Changes would be made for the sake of removing an appearance of contradiction between authors.

When, for example, a remark or question of Jesus is given in two or more different forms, various readings would be likely to arise from a desire of bringing about uniformity in the Gospels.

Some of these different readings were, at first, no doubt, confined to marginal notes, but afterwards crept into the text.

These marginal notes might have been intended only as explanations ; but a subsequent scribe might regard them as corrections, and in this way substitute the one for the other.

In this manner, the statement found in 1 John 5 : 7, about the "three that bear record in heaven," which is now known to be spurious, is thought by some to have found its way into the text.

The doxology attached to the Lord's prayer in Matt. 6 : 13, is another remarkable interpolation of the same general character.

It is thought to have been an early liturgical form, which being first recorded on the margin, was afterwards transferred to the text.

The number of intentional alterations, however, growing out of an ambition to correct the text, or out of some doctrinal bias, is comparatively few.

Among these the following may be noted as of doubtful authority :

In Mark 13 : 32, we read, " But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels

which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

In some copies, the phrase "neither the Son," is omitted.

In Acts 20:28 we read, "Feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood."

For the word "God," some manuscripts read "*Lord*."

Another passage supposed to have been tampered with is 1 Tim. 3:16, which says, "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh."

In some copies this reads as we have it in the New Version, "Great is the mystery of godliness; *He* who was manifest in the flesh was justified in the Spirit,"

The total number of various readings may startle the ordinary reader of the Bible when he first ascertains how many they are.

The examination of ancient manuscripts, versions and quotations, has brought to light, in all, about a hundred and fifty thousand variations.

But this fact need be no cause for alarm to any one, for a very large proportion of these, or about nineteen-twentieths, are of no genuine authority, and nineteen-twentieths of the remainder are of no importance as affecting the sense.

The truth of this latter statement may be readily seen by comparing the revised Version of the New Testament with the text of the common version.



It will thus be found that the vast majority of diversities relate to insignificant points which do not in any way affect the sense of Scripture.

There are only two passages of any considerable length which lack adequate verification.

The first is found in Mark 16:9-20, which are not contained in the Vatican and Sinaitic manuscripts, and are also rejected by the ancient Fathers, Eusebius and Jerome.

Tischendorf and most modern critics agree likewise in considering them as no part of the text written by Mark.

Some, however, are of the opinion that the Evangelist wrote *two* copies, only *one* of which lacked these closing verses of the chapter.

Others think that the manuscript written by Mark had another conclusion, but by some accident was mutilated, and that some early transcribers then condensed from the other Gospels these closing verses as they now stand in Mark's Gospel, in order to take the place of the mutilated or lost part.

The other passage includes John 7:53, to 8:11.

This section, says Dr. Plumtre, "is one of the most striking instances of an undoubted addition to the original text of the gospel narratives.

It is an insertion which breaks the order of the discourse."

These sentences express the almost unanimous verdict of scholars at present.

As to the origin of the passage, many would

versions from the origin of the first book to the close of the canon, weighing the evidence from various sources, differing in minutiae yet agreeing in the whole, we may well rest satisfied therefore, not only of the *authenticity*, but of the *integrity* of the sacred text.

The slight diversities in original documents, so far from arousing suspicion or being a just cause for the weakening of our faith, may be looked upon rather in the light of checks on a more material adulteration, and therefore offering themselves to the world as so many and separate witnesses to the essential integrity and identity of the inspired text through all periods of its history.

The learned Davidson writing from quite another critical standpoint, says, "Let the illiterate reader of the New Testament take *comfort* by learning that the "received text," to which he is accustomed, is substantially the same as that which men of the greatest learning, the most unwearied research, and the severest studies, have found in a prodigious heap of documents.

And all these, we may add, are found either corroborating or supplementing with their testimony the comforting fact that the Scriptures as we now have them are in very truth the Word of God to us.

As the distinguished critic, Bentley, has so tersely expressed, 'Tis competently *exact*, indeed, in the *worst* manuscripts now extant; nor is one article of faith or moral precept either perverted or lost in them; choose as awkwardly as you will

choose the worst by design, out of the whole lump of readings, make your variations as many more, . . . all the better to a knowing and serious reader, who is *thereby more richly furnished to select what he sees genuine.*

But even put them into the hand of a knave or a fool, and yet, with the most sinistrous and absurd choice, he shall not extinguish the light of any one chapter, nor so disguise Christianity but that every feature of it will still be the same.

To this Word of God then, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, so well tested and tried through all the ages past, will we ever turn as the rule of our faith and practice for the time to come.

## THE INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

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We would speak with caution of the interpretation which has for ages been accepted by the learned world.

And yet, is it not conceded on all hands that it has in many cases failed ?

Has not the Bible been accepted for ages, and that too by the highest authority of Christendom, as teaching things which it is universally admitted that it does not contain?

Why this failure then in a correct interpretation of the sacred text?

If the Bible is remarkable for one thing more than another, it is for its simplicity of thought and expression.

In proper keeping with its grand aim as the book of God's revelation to the mass of mankind, it is cast in a popular mould.

It addresses itself throughout to the common instincts and understanding of men, because it is intended to meet the great wants and anxieties of their nature.

Such a characteristic, since it necessarily bespeaks much plainness in the general tone and purport of the Bible, one naturally expects to find reflected in a commonly agreeing, if not absolutely uniform manner of interpretation.

In this matter, however, the actual results are in

ill accord with our apparently just expectations; for the diversity of opinion educed from Scripture, even on matters of the gravest moment, is almost endless.

If this fact could, with any degree of fairness, be attributed to the character of Scripture itself, then the conclusion would be inevitable that it must to a large extent be ambiguous in meaning and hard to be understood.

But the real source of this evil we are convinced lies in another direction.

Notwithstanding all the variety of interpretation to which Scripture has been subjected, we still retain the impression of that directness and simplicity, which its unbiased perusal produces.

Without questioning these prominent features of its character, there are other causes amply sufficient to account for the greater part of this diversity on matters of importance.

One of these has its origin in the very nature of Scriptural themes,—their profound, far-reaching, and often mysterious nature, which necessarily admits of only partial revelations.

And in consequence of an imperfect apprehension of these, men who have been unwilling to rest satisfied with them, have been quite prone to offer divergent conjectural explanations.

But another, and still more prolific source of this evil is to be found in the deep-rooted tendency of human nature to go to the Bible, not so much to learn in a child-like and submissive spirit what

it teaches of the work and ways of God, as to find a support for one's own pre-conceived opinions, or a license for the vain imaginations and unregulated desires which already hold a place in the heart.

To the combined influence of these two causes, and more particularly to the operation of the latter, are to be ascribed whole classes of false interpretations, and even the successive tides of these which are explicable only from the different states of mind in which men come to the study of the word of God.

Hence too, the diversified points of view from which they contemplate it, and the personal or individual aims to which they would render it subservient.

In consequence of these facts, it is not too much to say of an immense number of the views which in past or present times have been professedly derived from Scripture, that they belong rather to the history of the human mind than to the history of Scriptural interpretation.

They reflect the spirit of the *age* in which they were born, or the changeful forms of human thought and feeling through which men have passed, rather than the true teaching of God's word.

Thus, in the Middle Ages for example, the Bible was an authority for believing that the world is *flat*, and that it is the centre of the material system around which all the heavenly bodies revolve.

This mistake originated from the fact that the

Bible speaks of the rising and setting of the sun, and of the earth as resting upon a solid foundation.

The interpreters of Scripture then, failed to consider that inspired men speak of material things as they appear, and not as they really are in themselves.

Its material references are all illustrations of spiritual truths directly or indirectly; and how should those for whom these things were written have understood the record, if it had represented the world as revolving, and the sun as standing still, so to speak?

We read that holy men of old wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

And we have no evidence that those who penned His message contained in the Biblical documents, knew any more of nature's laws than their readers.

Their revelations being from God, and having respect to a world supernatural and divine, it was incumbent upon them to give the message as communicated, whether in the terms of scientific language as understood by them and their readers or not.

The court of Rome, in the sixteenth century, held that the Bible made it imperative on men to believe that the earth was the fixed centre around which sun, moon and stars performed their daily dance in consecutive circles.

And hence the edict went forth that men must believe this or burn.

We need not here enter into the history of the Newtonian theory, by whose demonstrations this interpretation was so effectually exploded ; its system is well known to every school-boy.

It is enough to say, that for this cause the church was compelled to remove its stakes to more tenable ground.

One of the greatest difficulties in the way of a true interpretation of God's Word has been to *rid* one's self of the perverting influences and false notions which have thus continually forced themselves upon the mind of the interpreter from without.

In addition to this there must be a skillful application of the materials placed within our reach, first to get at the real meaning of the text, and then, with due regard to its proper aim, to make a legitimate use of its contents.

In proportion to the faithfulness with which this has been done, has the work of interpretation ever made progress.

But at almost every step of the course, clouds of prejudice and mists of error have had to be cleared away,—and these not the native growth of Scripture, but of worldly intermixtures and accretions that gradually stole in and fastened themselves to it.

And the evil, as a whole, has been vastly increased by reason of the diverse quarters from which those extraneous influences have come, and the manifold, often antagonistic, directions in which they have wrought.



Rationalistic and speculative, superstitious and scientific forces have all in turn had their play here—now trying to wrest from Scripture its evident meaning, and then again burdening it with more than its proper import; sometimes evading its testimony on matters to which it fairly applies, and then again pushing it into provinces upon which it lays no just claims.

Scriptural interpretation, no less than scientific inquiry, has had its idols to vanquish in its search after the pure light of truth.

Interpreters of God's Word have been confident, and some are even to the present time, that Moses teaches that God created the universe in six natural days.

But geology has found so much in the rock-formations of the earth and their animal remains to contradict this view of the Mosaic history of creation, that the prevailing tendency now is to modify the former theory.

While the Infidel geologists accept the Mosaic account as a mere myth, Christian geologists have prolonged the six days into six vastly extended geological periods.

They occupy the same ground with literal interpreters in holding that the record refers to the formation of nature or things in the material world, but differ from them in regard to the time only, extending the six days to millions of ages instead of twenty-four hour periods.

Both of these theories as to what Moses de-

agree with Dr. Plumtre, who says, " We shall find reason to believe that it belongs to the Apostolic age, and preserves to us the record of an incident in the life of our Lord, but that it has not come to us from the pen of St. John."

It is a pleasurable conjecture that the incident recorded in this pericope was transmitted by oral tradition, and early recorded by some copyist on the margin of his manuscript.

This too, would account for its being inserted in different places.

In one manuscript it occurs after chapter vii; in a number of others, it occurs at the end of the Gospel ; and in four cursive manuscripts of value it is found at the end of Luke xxi.

Copyists thus appear to have inserted it where they could find the most convenient room for it.

Tischendorf says it is most certain that the passage respecting the woman taken in adultery was not written by John.

It is a fact to be emphasized that the Scriptures are almost wholly free from willful corruption.

And it is well that our knowledge of the sacred text does not depend upon any single manuscript.

No evidence of the faithful transmission of such a document as the New Testament, and of its protection against the causes of corruption, could, without a miracle, be made so satisfactory, as the proof of the substantial accuracy of its text, which is derived from the essential accordance of a great variety of manuscripts from different lands and ages.

The manuscripts are not only witnesses whose testimony is to be examined, sifted, and then estimated at its proper value ; but they are the witnesses first in order.

The particular *character* of each of these from which light is sought, must be ascertained.

There may be in a manuscript a tendency to error in one direction, and yet it may possess signal merit in another.

Its peculiarity must be taken into account, just as in a court-room the qualities of a witness are considered in deciding upon the weight to be given to his testimony.

Where the oldest, and otherwise most trustworthy manuscripts are generally agreed, it requires a strong array of proofs from the opposite side to turn the scale against them.

In addition to the manuscripts, the most ancient versions serve to throw light on the text.

These were made from older manuscripts than any now extant.

But in estimating the worth of their testimony, great caution is requisite.

One preliminary question to be settled is, How does it correspond in its general character to the original Scriptures ?

Does it keep close to the text where the text is known, or is it loose and free ?

Then the text of the versions themselves may have undergone changes, and may require to be settled by just such a process of investigation as that which we are pursuing in the larger field.

Obviously, an ancient version is of no authority in settling the text of the Greek Scriptures in places where that version has itself undergone modifications in later ages.

There are two of the old versions which are of pre-eminent value in these inquiries.

The first, is the *Peshito*, or the ancient Syriac translation.

The first reliable historical reference to this version is its use by Ephraim, a teacher of the Syrian church, in the fourth century ; but even then it was old, for in his commentaries Ephraim defines many of its words which were no longer understood by his countrymen.

Hence it is no improbable conjecture which assigns this version to the second century.

It is made from the Hebrew, probably by Jewish Christians, and includes the Old Testament canon, without the Apocryphal additions, which were translated later ; it is also both accurate and close.

The version of the New Testament seems to have been made afterwards.

In the sixth century the *Peshito* was universally received by Syrian Christians, even while the controversy raged between the Monophysites and Nestorians ; and so it is to this day. The Syrians have two versions—the *Simplex*, which was translated from the Hebrew into Syriac in the time of Addai the Apostle, or, as some say, in the time of Solomon, the son of David, and of Hiram ; and

then they have *Figarata*, which was translated from Greek into Syriac.

Associated on the same level with the Syriac versions, are the early Latin translations.

Jerome, in the fourth century, translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Latin, and revised earlier Latin versions of the New Testament.

In this way he produced the Vulgate.

From the fathers of the second century, we can gain considerable knowledge relative to the earlier Latin versions which formed the basis of Jerome's revision.

We have Augustine's testimony that a translation of the New Testament was undertaken by *any* one who knew sufficient Greek.

There existed then more than one Latin version of the Bible, and perhaps Britain, Gaul, and Spain had each a national version.

But in Africa, the Old Latin was the only one current.

It was there jealously guarded and kept in use after Jerome's version was elsewhere received.

Jerome's version was used by some as soon as finished, but it spread very gradually; for it was, indeed, received by others with a loud outcry of reproach, and it took even centuries for it to become recognized as the ecclesiastical translation of the Occident.

No ecclesiastic as such, no church court befriended it; it won its way solely upon its own merits, and not until the ninth century did its victory become complete.

As time went on, its text deteriorated.

Owing to his eyes and general health, Jerome had originally employed scribes to write it. The first copy, therefore, was probably not free from errors; and each successive copy only increased the evil.

The Old and the New Version being in use side by side led no doubt to a mixture of both texts.

*Cassiodorus*, in the sixth century, was the first to attempt a revision; but this private work could not stem the tide of corruption.

Its faultiness was so glaring, that Charlemagne ordered *Alcuin*, the most learned man in his day, and his trusted friend, to revise the text, in the year 802.

This Alcuin did, not by referring to the Hebrew and Greek, but to older and more correct Latin manuscripts, and produced a very good text, which, under the patronage of Charlemagne obtained wide currency, and long resisted decay.

But in the lapse of years, other revisions were required and made.

In the mean time a better day was in store for the Vulgate.

Printing was invented, and the first book sent out by the press was the Latin Bible.

But the Council of Trent, in 1546, demanded an authorized edition, and officially declared in favor of the "Old Vulgate" as being "authentic," but left undefined just what they would have to be understood as *meaning* by the "Vulgate."

The work of an authorized edition, by which to render the Latin text more worthy of confidence, was undertaken under Pope Pius IV., continued under Pius V., and completed under Sixtus V.; the results being published in three volumes, in 1590.

The text as thus printed was declared by the Papal constitution to be the true, lawful and authentic one, and to be unquestioned in all public and private discussion, reading, preaching and explanation.

But many changes had been made, and many typographical errors also, although none of a very serious character, had passed uncorrected.

It was however, so hastily and carelessly prepared, that although declared by papal authority to be correct, yet it had to be recalled, the reason being assigned at the suggestion of Bellarmin, that its errors and blemishes were those of the press.

The reason assigned was a false one; the real cause being that it was stigmatized by critics as containing "depraved missals" of the Popes; but to save the papal dignity, the apology was accepted, and a more correct edition was prepared and issued under the direction of Clement in 1592.

In this he corrected many of the patent errors into which *Sixtus* had fallen, and altered the text to a considerable extent.

A second revision was made under the authority of Clement in 1593.

It has long continued a disputed question be-

tween scholars whether the text of Sixtus V., or that of Clement VIII., is the more reliable.

But while unable as yet to reach a decision in the matter, meanwhile that of Clement has been adopted as the basis of editions of the Vulgate, since issued under sanction of the Roman See, notwithstanding the fact that practically it lies under the heavy anathemas of Almighty God, as proclaimed by the infallible Sixtus V.

The authorized Vulgate, however, is not so pure a text as some issued by other scholars not having this ecclesiastical sanction of their labors.

There is a third class of witnesses to whom the scholar can resort to aid him in determining the correct reading of a disputed passage.

The more ancient ecclesiastical writers, including those of a date prior to our oldest manuscripts, frequently quote from the New Testament.

We can therefore examine their citations, and compare them with the rest of our authorities.

In some instances their very silence is a most powerful negative argument.

The simple fact that the ardent defenders of the Trinity, such as Athanasius, in the fourth century never quote 1 John 5:7, is an evidence that this verse was not in their Bibles.

Had they known of it, there is no doubt but that they would have appealed to it, and laid great stress upon it in their defense.

Unhappily, the testimony of the fathers on the text is lessened in value, for two reasons.



The first is, the loose manner of quotation which then prevailed.

The earliest fathers quote less exactly from the New Testament writings than from the Old.

The second difficulty attending their testimony as conclusive evidence is, the imperfection of the text of the fathers themselves.

As in the case of other ancient authors, so their writings require emendation, having been exposed to the usual sources of corruption.

When any passage was made the subject of particular comment, as for example, in the exegetical writings of Origen, or when a Scriptural passage became the theme of doctrinal controversy, then only its exact phraseology is brought to light and determined.

The discovery of the Sinaitic manuscript was a most welcome addition to the means in hand of solving doubtful problems, and especially where the evidence seemed to be equally balanced.

Here now was a new witness, brought out of concealment, of venerable authority, and thus capable of speaking the decisive word on various litigated points.

In addition to the kinds of testimony already described, there is the evidence obtained from the known *style* and habit of *expression* of the author whose text is subjected to criticism.

Thus in Shakespeare, for example ; where two readings are in question, with regard to which the evidence appears equally balanced, we unhesi-

tatingly choose that which has the Shakesperian style and tone.

In New Testament criticism, a considerable amount of external evidence may sometimes be neutralized by means of the intrinsic probability, or improbability, that the author would have used the particular expression in dispute.

Does it *sound* like his language ?

Does it accord with his usual *manner* of expression ?

Does it harmonize with his teaching elsewhere ?

A satisfactory answer to these various questions will very materially aid us in determining the genuineness of *any* writing, of which we have such circumstantial knowledge.

But it must be admitted that in this department of inquiry, there is room for the operation of a merely subjective bias.

There is therefore no *absolute* criterion by which we can be governed ; but much must of course be determined by the critical feeling.

And this warrants the assertion that no amount of learning, and it might be added, no amount of candor, will supersede the power of *mental* astuteness or critical *intuition* necessary for efficiency in this work ; and those therefore who possess it are rare geniuses in criticism.

They are not infallible it is true, and yet even their conjectures are always deserving of consideration.

In classical criticism, Bentley may be referred to as a man of this stamp.

This is not the place to attempt an enumeration of the *variety* of considerations by which a sound critic is influenced, and which contribute to make up his judgment.

We will mention one thing only, which in a sense may serve to illustrate other considerations in arriving at a just conclusion.

A certain reading, as compared with its rival, may be supported by a great number of respectable authorities.

Yet we may be able to discern just how it originated, just what slip of the pen or misapprehension of the thought may have naturally given occasion to it; while on the contrary, we discern with clearness that its rival cannot be accounted for in any such way.

Hence we adopt the reading that has much less external support, in preference to the other with its abundance of doubtful claims.

This is the verdict reached from a broad view of the probabilities in the case.

Questions respecting textual criticism are not to be settled by weighing the papers on a pair of scales.

The considerations to be taken into account are very numerous, and many of them delicate; so that they require a correspondingly delicate sense to appreciate them.

It was not until long after the invention of printing that a Greek New Testament was issued from the press.

The Old Testament was printed in Hebrew, and the entire Bible in Latin, before there was any special demand for the New Testament Scriptures in the original tongue.

This fact was due to the low state of scholarship in Europe.

The New Testament was printed, with the Greek and Latin in parallel columns, in 1514.

It was not *published*, however, until six years after the appearance of the edition by Erasmus, the *first* Greek Testament to circulate in print, which was sent forth by the celebrated publisher Froben, of Basle, in 1516, and this was followed by other editions in 1519, 1522, 1527, and 1535.

Erasmus made haste to get his book through the press in advance of the Complutensian edition by Cardinal Himenes also in press.

He used but a very few manuscripts, among them Codex Basil (B) vi. 25 for the Gospels ; Codex Basil ix., for the Acts and Epistles ; and for the Apocalypse, he had but a single mutilated manuscript, the Codex Reuchlin ; for a long time thought to be lost, but had recently been discovered.

As the last five verses were missing from it, he supplied them by a translation of his own made from the Latin.

In subsequent editions he made many corrections of that first published, which, with the accompanying Latin translation, was all prepared and put through the press within one year.

After the Complutensian Bible appeared, Erasmus availed himself of it in his further revisions of the text, and by the fifth edition succeeded in reducing its errors to the least possible number.

One of the most celebrated of the early Greek Testament editors was Robert Stephens, who enjoyed the patronage of Francis I. of France.

While at Paris, he published three editions of the Greek Testament, in 1546, 1549, and 1550 respectively.

He afterwards became a Protestant and went to Geneva, where his fourth edition was issued in 1551; and it is in this one that the device of verses first appears in the text.

This new departure introduced by him was devised while on a horseback journey from Paris to Lyons; and it became so universally popular that it has been followed ever since.

The third edition of Stephens, published in 1550, became the standard or received text in England.

The first edition of Theodore Besa, the pupil of Calvin, appeared in 1565, and was followed with other editions in 1582, 1589, and 1598.

His variations from the text of Stephens are not very material.

The text used in Stephens' third edition, and emended from Besa, was the one adopted by the Elzevirs, and passed through five editions from 1624 to 1662.

The second Elzevir edition published at Leyden in 1633, became the standard text on the Continent, as the Stephens in England.

It was prefaced with the bold announcement, "Thou hast the *text now received by all*, in which we give nothing altered or corrupted."

From this we have the origin of the phrase "received text" as now applied to the Greek New Testament.

The fourth edition of Stephens and the fourth of Beza form the basis of the authorized English revision.

And both these texts are so closely allied with that of the fourth edition of Erasmus, that this last, as Ellicott has remarked, may be considered the mother-text of our English version.

What is the character of this text?

Stephens used only sixteen manuscripts, and these were not very accurately collated.

One of his authorities was an old uncial, the Codex of Beza, the text of which is remarkably corrupt.

Beza's critical work was likewise of no great value, he being more of a theologian and commentator than a textual critic. Since that day, however, several hundreds of manuscripts have been diligently examined by competent scholars.

A crowd of witnesses have been interrogated, and have thrown a flood of light on the various questions which criticism has to determine.

Our present English translation was executed by the bishops of the English church, in the reign of Elizabeth, and was revised by the authority of James I. in 1611.

The more critical scholarship of our times, and the increased facilities for arriving at the correct original text, together with the changes in our own language, have given us a more faithful text and a better translation.

Having thus given a hasty review of the origin of the various books of the New Testament, and their formation into a canon, let us now take a general survey of their contents.

The first chapter of Matthew connects the historic stream of the New Testament with the Old, by tracing the genealogy of Jesus Christ to Abraham.

Unlike the Old, it opens not with the doctrine of God in the creation of the world, and His providence in the beginning over the Hebrew people ; but rather as a culmination of that old economy it begins with an unfolding of the new dispensation, in which God is revealed in the flesh, not simply as the Creator of worlds, but as the Savior of men.

This is the distinctive doctrine of the four Gospels as set forth in the life and ministry, miracles, death and resurrection of our Lord.

He was Immanuel,—God *with* us.

During His earthly ministry, He chose twelve disciples who were with him in his life and death, and as witnesses of His resurrection, were to proclaim the glad news to all the world.

He had told these disciples beforehand that He must needs go away from them, but that after His ascension into heaven the Holy Ghost should be

given unto them, under whose power they should go forth and preach all things that they had both seen and heard of Him, beginning at Jerusalem.

The Acts of the Apostles contains the most ancient and chief history of the carrying out of this ministry.

The gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in the second chapter of the Acts, is the fulfillment of the Savior's promise, and is the opening scene in the dispensation of the Spirit, which continues not only until this day, but will go on enlarging its domain and increasing in its power and influence till the end of the world.

It is the dispensation of *God*; not as the world-maker only, and not as manifest in Christ simply, but as an everywhere present *Spirit*, who, dwelling in the hearts of believers, is to be worshipped in all places.

Under this mighty afflatus of the ever living, ever present One, the disciples began their ministry.

Without money, and without worldly distinction in political power or social position, education or influence, these men began the enormous task of subjugating the *world* to Christ.

In their work they were exposed to persecution from both Jews and pagans.

Yet against these two opposing forces they stood firm and invincible; and clothed with the simple armor of truth and the power of the Spirit, they continued to preach Christ crucified and risen to the very end.



These holy men, filled with the Spirit of God and giving unction to their words, hurried to and fro with their message of love and salvation ; and the result was that thousands were converted, and numbers added to the church daily.

With a God-given purpose in their hearts, nothing could divert or stay them in their work.

Persecutions might arise, stripes be administered, imprisonments follow, and even martyrdom itself stare them in the face.

Yet right onward they went in their glad mission, until not only Jerusalem, but Galatia, and Ephesus, Corinth and even Rome, heard the gospel of Christ and bowed before the conquering power of His cross.

Having planted churches in these various cities, they afterwards addressed letters or epistles to them ; not only concerning matters of doctrine and church government, but for the correction of local errors, or their mutual encouragement in good works, and for the general instruction of all in the way of life and duty.

This comprises the body of the New Testament Scriptures, which is supplemented by a book of prophecy or Revelation at the close, in which John, by the aid of heavenly visions, is permitted both to see and reveal to us the unfolding purposes of God in His church for the ages yet to come.

Having thus traced the history and transmission of the Scriptures by means of manuscripts and

signed to teach agree in this, that his history of creation is a matter of science rather than of faith.

For this reason we think them likely to share the same fate of the one which the court of Rome imprisoned men for not believing.

There are some points, it is true, in which the science of geology is still thought to conflict with the account of the creation in Genesis; but on these we cannot enter at present.

We may simply say in passing, that geologists themselves are far from being agreed on the points in question, thus showing how *much* in this department of science theory *still* mingles with discovery.

But if, in the progress of things real and ascertained, discovery should necessitate a somewhat different reading of the first chapter of Genesis from the common one, it need not occasion any great surprise.

The *probability* of its being true will become all the more apparent when we consider the remarkable brevity of the narrative, as compared with the majestic and altogether peculiar events which it records, and also when we consider how manifestly the narrative was formed, not for scientific purposes, but with a view of exhibiting more especially the moral relations of God to the world, and to man whom He placed over it.

Another cause of the failure in interpretation may be attributed to the dissecting of words and

idioms to the neglect or obscuratation of the spiritual truths which they were designed to reflect.

It is remarkable of quotations from the Old Testament in the New, that they are largely made from the Septuagint or Greek translation, and with no verbal exactness even to that.

In many cases the sense is given in language very different from the original Hebrew and Greek.

The Apostles were intent upon *truths* rather than words and phrases.

The verbal critics of later times often tithe mint, anise and cumin, to the neglect of the weightier matters of revelation.

Verbal criticism toys with words, as a cat with her mouse, until they die under the operation.

It is said that a young artist, in order to improve himself in his profession, once picked to pieces the work of an old master to see how the different coats of paint were laid on.

He failed to consider that the art-ideal which those pigments were used to reflect was a thing of sentiment, totally distinct from the canvas, and that in picking it to pieces he had not only destroyed its representative value but made it worthless for anything in his own calling.

And so we may say that these critical artists who, through an eager curiosity in word dissection or the desire to increase their philological skill and knowledge, eliminate from Bible language the art-ideal of spiritual truth as represented by its original Author, destroy as effectually

its moral worth to men as he who picks to pieces a work of human art in order to find out the order and quality of its paint-layers.

God's word, like the flaming sword at Eden's gate, turns every way reflecting its light in all directions, so that each spiritually minded reader may see it something different from what others see, and yet all may be alike true.

The events of the exode from Egypt supplied our Lord with a text for a discourse respecting Himself as the bread of heaven for a famishing world, while to Paul they furnished a type of the Christian life.

So too, the waters of Noah indicated to the prophet Isaiah (54 : 9), the oath of God for the protection of His people ; as taught by Jesus in (Matt. 24 : 35-41), they illustrated the necessity of spiritual watchfulness ; while to Peter they were significant of the virtue of baptism (1 Peter 3 : 21), and also furnished a solemn warning to false teachers, as in 2 Peter 2 : 5.

Let the reader study up these, and such other like related passages found all through God's Word, and he will see how infinitely varied are the practical uses of spiritual interpretation.

It is the province of an enlightened Scriptural interpretation to discern aright the diverse elements in the Bible, give to each its due prominence, and yet keep all within their proper limits.

The characteristic phases of this interpretation manifest themselves in the New Testament Scrip-

ture, especially in the Epistles which bring the full light of the Gospel to bear on the past and present dispensations of God in the world.

But even here also the light soon became dimmed by the admission of heterogeneous elements from other quarters.

Instead of taking up and developing the principles laid down on the subject under consideration, in the New Testament Scriptures, men began to yield to philosophic and heathenish influences, and thus subjected *much* that was written to the puerile conceits and unnatural suppositions of critics, and ending with incongruous mixtures.

For example, the fathers knew well enough that Christ and His salvation were the *end* to which the Old dispensation with all its rites and ceremonies pointed, and that the New dispensation, containing the *reality* which was but dimly foreshadowed by the other, must necessarily be vastly superior to it.

And yet, being only partially acquainted with the Old Testament, as but few of them had carefully studied it, they often mistook the real nature of its connection with the New ; and while it presented Jewish rites and ordinances as being in direct antagonism to the Gospel, still they saw no inconsistency in permitting a ritualism in the church of essentially the same nature as the old, and far more complicated and cumbrous.

The fair spiritual form of Christianity thus be-

came early shrouded with the old garments of the letter.

And when in the hands of the school-men the composite elements were reduced to a regular theological system, the progressive character of revelation was virtually ignored.

Creation and redemption, Judaism and Christianity were treated as if they appeared simultaneously in the counsels of God; and the records concerning them were prized only as containing the materials for judging in respect to what was false or sound in doctrine.

This being true, it was likely to occur that, in cases of discussion over unsettled questions, they would often be wrongly used, and applied to conclusions essentially erroneous.

Even systematic divines, who grew up under Protestant influences, well-nigh overlooked the principle of progression in the divine plan, and failed in a measure to see many elements of truth and duty embodied in the Old Testament religion, and in a form wisely adapted to the time in which they then lived.

It would consume too much time to give illustrations of the various influences brought to bear on interpreters of Scripture in the past, and to notice in detail the shades of difference which have appeared in the style of interpretation successively adopted even by Protestant writers.

We can merely indicate some of the results here; which are, that by the more thorough inves-

tigation of the *sense* of Scripture, and a careful application of the *principles* it establishes, there has been gained, if not a clearer apprehension of the advance made in spirirual light and liberty by the introduction of the Gospel, at least a deeper insight into the meaning and design of the things which *preceded* it.

The history, typology, and prophecy of the Old Covenant have become better understood, inso-much that the works devoted to the consideration of these subjects until within a comparatively late period, have now been rejected in a great measure, as being antiquated.

But in the Protestant church a spirit arose, which, in another direction, involved the interpretation of Scripture in a more serious conflict, and the plan of God in a deeper maze of ambiguity.

The rationalistic spirit exalted reason to the same place in morals and religion as in science, and made it the measure of all things to be accepted and believed by men.

It stripped the plan of God also of its more essential elements, from the fact that it would acknowledge nothing strictly supernatural in Christ's person and work. To justify its theory based upon this meager belief, without formally discarding the authority of Scripture, it adopted a style of interpretation which explained away into strong hyperboles or vague generalities all passages bearing on the divinity of Christ, the personality of the Spirit, the reality of our Lord's miracles, the

atoning character of His death and other cognate doctrines.

But the simple and unambiguous statements of the Bible have proven too powerful for this process of reduction, and after every shift and device of learning have been tried, the most competent scholars agree in rejecting the rationalistic mode of interpretation as being utterly untenable.

But another, and a very common cause of failure in true interpretation of the Scriptures is found in the very opposite direction from that above mentioned, namely, in *ignorance* and misconception of the true scope and *spirit* of revelation.

Hasty conclusions which result from ignorance, or from superficial examination and prejudice, are among the most frequent reasons asserted for unbelief.

Men who have not a single qualification for criticism of the sacred text are even among the most zealous and blatant in their attempts to criticise God in His word and works.

A moment's reflection ought to convince them, if they had mental acumen enough to discern it, that they are dealing with problems beyond their depth, and which must be left therefore for *others* to fathom and solve. who are better *qualified* for the task.

It is evident to all, that there are many passages in holy writ, both in the original languages and in our own translation, which are not plain to every



one, and which can only be explained, if at all, by the thoughtful and learned.

And there are other passages, the truth of which, in their spiritual reach, meaning, and conscious results, can properly be understood by those only who have experienced the power and enlightenment of divine grace.

It is impossible for others to know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

But after all that even sanctified learning, intellect, and heart can interpret from this storehouse of wisdom and truth, still there are texts, the depth of whose spiritual meaning and vast range of application have not yet been attained.

It is no matter of surprise to us therefore that those who have neither learning, mental superiority nor religious principle, should meet with difficulties.

The greatest wonder of all indeed, would consist in such as are avowedly opposed to all religion not finding *much* to antagonize and reject in the Bible.

But wherever Scripture is read in the spirit of its own light, and taken in the native import and simplicity of its words, all perversion and contrariety of its meaning necessarily disappear, leaving no difference of opinion to exist among unbiased interpreters of Scripture.

The variety of views which have been expressed by believers in revelation, have had their origin for the most part, as we have already stated, in

the history of the human mind rather than in the history of Scriptural interpretation.

They have not sprung *from* Scripture itself, but have been read *into* it by reason of changing circumstances, and the fluctuating currents of opinion which were unfavorable to an enlightened study and just appreciation of its contents.

Hence the comparative ease with which simple-minded Christians, if only guided by the interpreting Spirit, arrive at the same conclusions on all essential points as those already established by the most competent interpreters of Scripture.

The chief conflict now is with rationalism—rationalism in the scientific form, not disputing so much about the *interpretation* of Scripture in itself, but the *authenticity* of its writings rather, and the *credibility* of its statements.

Figurative language supplies an endless fund of matter for carping adversaries whose ignorance is their only protection from universal contempt.

But in this conflict, also, we have no doubt but that the Bible will hold its ground and even gain by the process.

Just as in the past, the more the materials have increased by which its veracity might be tested, and the greater the exactness and fidelity with which it has been examined, so also has the fuller light been thrown on its testimony, and the more general has been the agreement in its interpretation among those who have approached it in a sincere and teachable spirit.

And thus we feel assured will it continue to be in the future.

As it casts its light upon all, so by a reflex law will it receive light from all, and that in proportion as the means of knowledge increase and the results of experience accumulate.

And thus as the process goes on, a clear discernment will be obtained of those parts which have hitherto been found most obscure, and a fuller meaning will be derived from others likewise which have formerly been but partially understood.

Looking backward, we see how the church, as by inspiration of God has already come to a clear understanding of the Scripture Canon, and is now agreed also in the interpretation of all its essential doctrines relating to faith and practice.

And so too may we not hope with confidence, that the same unerring instinct—the instinct of truth, in which an overruling Providence conceals Himself,—the work of Scripture interpretation will still be carried on amid all seeming chance and in spite of all human error, until we arrive at a truer knowledge of *all* that God hath spoken to the children of men?

In view of what has already been accomplished, and is being done still along this line to-day, we may contemplate the grander results awaiting us in the future and take courage from the prospect that—“*Then* shall we know, if we follow on, to know the Lord: for His going forth is prepared as

the morning ; and He shall come unto us as the rain, and as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

Add to this the declaration of Christ that "when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into *all* truth," and what a mighty inspiration of faith does it not furnish for the prosecution of this, and every other form of investigation by which to know God and His revealed will concerning us !

Surely it becomes us not to despond then concerning the perpetuity of God's Word and the brighter glory that shall follow from a more perfect knowledge of it, but to look forward in the spirit of a calm trust and abiding confidence.

We have *all* things to hope for in the future and nothing to fear.

"God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain."



## TESTIMONIALS.

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I have read with pleasure and interest the opening chapters of the above work by my old seminary friend, Rev. Isaac C. Hughes, and regret that time did not permit me to complete the reading. The style is terse and vigorous, the thought clear, and the themes always timely, and I hope to read the work entire when it is published.

REV. J. G. FRAZER,  
Cleveland, O.      *Sec. O. Home Miss. Society.*

REV. I. C. HUGHES: Dear Brother—I think your book is excellent. It discusses an important subject in a clear and forcible manner. I think it will interest and usefully instruct the readers, of which I hope it will have many.

Yours very fraternally,  
J. M. STURTEVANT, D. D.

I heartily concur with the opinion of Dr. Sturtevant, and am further impressed with the great suggestiveness of the successive pages of the book.

Wellington, O.      REV. S. D. GAMMELL.

MY DEAR BROTHER HUGHES—I have been exceedingly interested in reading your very able manuscript. Parts of it are truly eloquent. It exhibits a vast amount of research and a rare vigor of style.

REV. ROBERT G. HUTCHINS, D. D.  
*Pastor 2d Church, Oberlin, O.*















































